

TODAY'S SPEECH

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Tell Your Friends!

Speech Is Civilization -- Silence Isolates

One Man's Opinion

FROM OUR READERS

"This year's issues proving so exciting makes me enclose a \$5.00 check, for which please send me all available back issues. . . ." writes Kenneth Tarpley, of the English and Speech Department, Community High School, Crystal Lake, Illinois. And from Leon J. Clark, Salem, W. Va., there came another \$5.00 check for the same back issues, together with a request for information on how to join the Speech Association of the Eastern States. Other readers may like to know that for \$5.00 they may receive ten back issues, including the "historical" Vol. I, No. 1. To join the SAES, send your name and address, together with a check for \$3.50 (or for \$7.50 if you wish to become a "Sponsor" for TODAY'S SPEECH) to Mr. Wiley Bowyer, Executive Secretary of SAES, Adelphi College, Long Island, N. Y.

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We are proud of the publication during the past few months of two interesting and valuable books which germinated from articles originally published by their authors in our pages. Readers who have followed the writings by George Rice and Dominick Barbara will be pleased to know that they can now secure the expanded and completed development of their themes in these two publications:

George P. Rice, Jr. *Law for the Public Speaker*. Christopher Publishing House, Boston, 1958, pp. 189. \$2.75.

Dominick A. Barbara. *Your Speech Reveals Your Personality*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1958, pp. 174, \$5.50.

Both books are distinctively "new," with fresh and valuable contributions. Dr. Rice, who is a practicing attorney in Indianapolis, as well as a Professor of Speech at Butler University, writes on all phases of the law, historical and contemporary, as it relates to protection alike of the speaker and the audience, copyright provisions on public utterances, and the education of the public speaker. Dr. Barbara, M.D., a practicing psychoanalyst

in New York City, and author, also, of *Stuttering: A Psychodynamic Approach to its Understanding and Treatment*, Julian Press, N. Y., 1954, writes of the influence of speech in the formation and expression of both normal and abnormal personalities.

From Dr. Rice's book you can learn when the first appeal for the legal protection of the freedom of speech was made (1573); what income Cicero earned from his legal speaking (\$30,000 a year); how the courts protect the "right to be silent"; what the Supreme Court has contributed to the formation of a philosophy of speech in a democracy; where and how the limits of free speech are established; what protection a speaker may expect from a hostile audience; and what the Supreme Court thinks of Owen Wister's famous injunction in *The Virginian*: "When you say that, smile!"

Dr. Barbara (like Dr. Rice) brings to his writing the rich resources of a mind broadly and humanely educated, so that both books abound in historical, literary, and philosophical references. From Dr. Barbara you may learn what "formidable imprints" speech has made upon civilization and how modern man, like primitives, is influenced by "the magic of words"; how you or your friends may suffer from the "Demosthenes complex"; the three categories into which people-as-speakers may be catalogued; how "hidden messages" are contained in our daily discourse; and how wise attention to the speaking mannerisms of a developing child may help him to grow into an effective person.

Are you interested in how much of our daily communication is oral — or in how much public speaking is done in the United States? Read Rice! Are you concerned with what your own speech habits may reveal concerning your own personality? Read Barbara! Both books deserve a place on your own private reading stand.

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Here's an idea suggested by one of our readers that could have considerable interest and value. As you read
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THE ART OF CONVERSATION—

By Egbert S. Oliver

Dr. Oliver, Professor of English at Portland (Oregon) State College, continues his series of cogent, practical, and humane articles on the most popular of all the arts — conversation.

CONVERSATION IS LIKE A HARDY PERENNIAL PLANT, constantly trying to grow and flower and find fulfillment. As the world of nature is constantly striving to push its hardy plants forth into life, so the social nature of man is trying to find contact and the minds of men are seeking the light of communication which will flower and fructify as conversation. Though some kinds of conversation may more readily grow in one environment than in another, conversation may develop in any social environment at any time. Man has the wish for it: man has the capacity for it; but also man has within his nature the means to destroy conversation.

THE CONVERSATIONAL CUL-DE-SAC

The plant, even the hardy plant, may be killed or at least brought to pause in its growth cycle by an endless array of hostile factors. The plant can be denied food and moisture, or light, or air. It can be stepped on — by man, goat, horse, elephant or any other lumbering heedless creature. It can be defoliated by goat or cow or herbivorous animal, or overcome by disease which will suck up its needed elements. In other words, the plant which has the drive toward fruition and fulfillment may be hampered or hindered by an infinite variety of antagonistic factors.

The same is true of conversation. In any human situation centering in conversation some one person may so interfere as to seriously handicap or entirely stifle the normal flow of ideas and the bringing of man's wit and comprehension to bear upon them.

A conversation may be such a delicate balance of mood and spirit that a raised eyebrow and a cynical and questioning "So?" may shatter it. Sometimes the refusal of some of those present to participate and contribute to the common subject may strangle the group effort. Sometimes the headstrong dominance of one person may starve the subject.

Many times conversational effort is thwarted by what may be the clumsy good intentions of the thoughtless or inexperienced participant.

A small and normally congenial group of men and women were the other evening discussing, within the general subject of religion, some aspects of the divine relationship of God and Christ. For purposes of commenting on conversational booby traps the subject could as well have been Chinese art of the Ming Dynasty or the rise of medieval cities. Here were gathered a few

quite well educated men and women attempting to clarify and extend the intellectual experiences of all by pooling the resources of each.

But road blocks, dangerous barriers, were dropped into the midst of the group. There are remarks or observations which do not lead forward toward the light but which interpose difficulties.

One person remarks, "Psychologists say that man has a myth-creating propensity which could very well result in the story of the Virgin Birth." Now here one could jump on the idea of the virgin birth for comment; but the stumbling block is involved in the affirmation, "Psychologists say . . ." This one can neither affirm nor deny. One can neither agree with it nor disagree with it. What psychologists? When? Where? Two psychologists? Two hundred psychologists? Dependable psychologists? Where does the sentence leave the conversation except in a blind alley? It is as slippery as the intentionally vague commercial about "Five out of six doctors prove that itsy-bitsy capsules overcome configuration of the liver."

The remedy here is a very simple one, easily comprehended and easily applied. Let the person speaking drop the formalism of the appeal to non-existent authority and advance the idea in his own capacity as a thinking individual. The idea then is not presented as final, as closed, but as something to be entered into the group consideration. It goes something like, I have heard, or I have read somewhere that man's myth-creating propensities may have developed the story of the Virgin Birth. What do you think of that?

Someone else — or, more probably, the same person at another juncture — says, "If you will read the history of religion you will find that the Buddhists don't have a god." Here again is this appeal to pseudo-authority, unlimited, undefined, ungraspable. Whoever in the group is willing to continue the conversation must avoid this road block. Who has read the history of religion? Is that some one particular book? Is that an absolute authority, so that everyone who reads "it" — but there is no "it." There are many histories of religions, some much more authoritatively written than others.

This hypothetical converser of ours also entered into the group discussion with various further conversation-stoppers. "That happens to be a subject of particular interest to me and I have found that . . ." After this

opening anyone who dares to differ with or add to this self-affirmed authority must be bold and understanding. Or the humble beginning, "I don't present myself as an authority, but I happen to know that the myth of the Virgin Birth did not arise for a hundred years after the birth of Jesus." Thus I am no authority, but I make an authoritative statement.

These examples were culled from one evening's conversation in one group; but the most interesting conversation stopper of all was one man's excited cry at one place of animated discussion, "Wait! Wait! Wait! I've not said the final word yet!" This had its humorous aspect, even to the man uttering it, and after the general laugh and good natured chiding it was easy for the conversation to resume. The other vaguely phrased appeals to intangible authority are much more difficult to cope with in conversation and require the wit and tenacity of some determined individual for the spirit of conversation to survive them.

Our typical group conversation illustrated a further hazard to the successful conversational interchange. The special interest of individuals may stifle the group activity instead of being used to the fulfillment of the group quest. One man was interested in linguistics, the nature of language, and every time he saw any possible occasion he would tug at the subject to draw it into his particular yard. He was a bulldog of tenacity, too, and he made many occasions to bully or crowd or shove, or lead or drive or haggle the general subject into his own little area. He was doing it with good intentions. Feeling that differences were often linguistic he was for stopping everything else and constructing a perfect language right now — with no antecedents, no connotations: only denotations.

The group were not in a mood for that approach. They were not intellectually prepared for it. They were not sympathetic to it. They wished not to have to fight off a linguistic attack but rather to go forward toward the process of pooling and clarifying ideas and experiences. Hence the special pleading of a special interest was a deterrent to conversation.

A further hazard to conversation when more than three people are grouped together in discussion is the whispering start at a side conversation. We have all seen the group of eight or ten persons who started out with one general conversation soon deteriorate into four or five little nests of buzzing, with no center and no general cohesion. It is easier to recognize this problem than it is to suggest remedies. It is a chaotic deterioration of conversation to have the general attention to the social situation fragmented.

The pitfalls to conversation are numerous. The most devastating destruction to the conversational spirit may well be wrought by the persons most desirous of continuing the conversation. We are all guilty of presenting obstructions at various times. An awareness of the situation might help to reduce the occasions we ourselves introduce and a little consideration may help us

to avoid and overcome the blind alleys into which others might be leading conversations which we wish to continue.

THE CONVERSATIONAL FRATERNAL ASSIST

A different kind of conversational obstacle is the fraternal assist — or more frequently the conjugal assist. It is a kind of *deus ex machina*. It is one person getting the idea that another person should make such and such contribution to the conversation.

The conversation is rolling along well or moderately well when Susie, who has been wanting some chance to get in the fray, gets the appropriate inspiration. Something happened to her husband John which would be appropriate here.

"John," she says, "tell them about your yellow jackets. You know. The time you caught them in the vacuum cleaner."

Here there are two elements which work against the successful continuity of the conversation. First, everyone must stop, for the floor has been called for and given to John. There is an awkward pause, or a few remarks are passed around in an embarrassed way. Then there is silence awaiting John's anecdote.

John is getting himself ready to start when Susie assists him further. "Come on, John," she says coaxingly. "You know. Tell them about how you — you know — the bees in the vacuum cleaner."

Conversation has natural and normal pacing. It cannot be forced or shoved to advantage. This is an entirely different situation from the successfully prepared conversational circumstances often set up for Dr. Samuel Johnson by Boswell. Boswell would not say, "Come on, Sammie, tell us that story about . . ." Boswell's more successful way was to try to lead conversation toward an open door into which Johnson, if he wished, might enter. Sometimes Boswell would ask a question which might lead toward Johnson's expression of judgment or wit or anecdote. But John, shoved forward by his wife, has no opportunity to lead naturally into his anecdote. The situation is made unnatural rather than natural and all attention is focused on him while he tries to drag in a subject across a now dead conversational situation.

In the second place, beyond that problem of timing and pacing, of natural flow and normal introduction — he now has no anecdote to tell. The nub of it has been revealed. The point has been broken: the lightning flash of wit which is the essence of the whole thing has been forestalled. The fuse has been lit before the powder is put in the fire cracker.

John might have had an experience catching bees in a vacuum cleaner. It might have been a highly charged anecdote. It had its novelty and its excitement and its incongruity. But the telling of it had to be properly approached for the humor and excitement of the situation to live. This kind of external intrusion into con-

versation is harmful, whether the friend calls upon friend for the remark or the anecdote; whether the wife calls upon husband; or whether the husband calls upon the wife.

It is not being helpful for John to think he may give Susie a chance to glow in the limelight by suddenly calling upon her to tell of her repulsing the vacuum cleaner salesman, you know, the one you told where he could go clean when he wanted to clean your rug. It might work once in a while, but mostly it will not work. Everyone may be polite, but there is a break in the conversation and if it is to be restored and picked up again it must be through social efforts restoring a break.

The quoting of someone who is present is another delicate aspect of conversation which may well result in a sinking rather than a raising of the level of interest and achievement. This is a kind of fraternal or conjugal assist related to the other variety. Bill recollects that Susie once made a brilliant observation appropriate to the subject under discussion. He searches his mind, he thinks he has it. The opportunity to insert it in the stream of things is slipping away and he grabs for the opening. He starts the quotation, but mixes it up, forgets the central point, twists it into the ludicrous — and then appeals to Susie for aid. "What was it you said?" he asks. Then he assures everyone, "It was very clever and it just fits what we are talking about." This kind of fraternal assist usually results in a fumble.

It would be well for each person to remember his own individuality and that he, too, has a relationship to the group and to the universe. Susie need not ask for John's story: she herself has her own experiences and observations to relate. John need not try unsuccessfully to quote Susie: he can speak for himself — or quote Shakespeare. If the group is a series of individuals each holding the same relationship to the whole circle, then the ends of conversation are better served without back-seat driving — by each person making contributions out of his own individuality.

There is, however, the essential fraternal assist, represented by the traditional second man in the old vaudeville teams. The set up and the assist — unrehearsed, but in a way genuinely understood — are as beautiful a part of conversation as they are of baseball. The famous short-to-second-to-first double play can be a beauty to behold. The fact that one has seen it before does not prevent a baseball enthusiast from enjoying it again. The knowledge that it is looked for, practiced, anticipated, does not spoil the appreciation of the well-executed play.

In successful conversation the one person may set up the situation for another. He may toss the ball — "throw it" is a little too violent for conversation — to another, who may then toss it on to a third. Persons who are experienced in conversation learn to appreciate team play and learn to participate in it. It is certain that some persons have greater conversational skills

than others, and that the very matter of differing conversational skills offers variety and distinction.

Team play on the basketball court may place the best shot on the team in the most appropriate position for him to score a field goal. It is not achieved by someone saying to him, "John, why don't you go over to the left of the key, about fifteen feet out, and take a shot. I'll screen for you." It is rather achieved in a natural series of action and reaction, much as the conversational success must be achieved.

John can help Susie tell the anecdote of the repulsed vacuum cleaner salesman if he knows how to go about it, and likewise Susie can help John relate his anecdote of the bees in the vacuum cleaner. But neither will be of much aid to the other — or to the conversational success of the group — by a bold frontal attack stopping the conversation and then handing the pieces to the other under the guise of making a fraternal assist.

TEMPERAMENT, INTELLECTUAL HABITS, AND CONVERSATION

In one of his slight but delicious essays, "Of Democritus and Heraclitus," Montaigne concerns himself with temperamental differences: "The one always, when he stepped over his threshold, laughed at the world, the other always wept." Death, so Montaigne tells us, seemed terrible to Cicero, it was coveted by Cato, and it seemed indifferent to Socrates.

In the same way persons differ widely in regard to conversation. One can never be sure that any particular conversation — in itself an experiment in human relations — will prosper. The subject, or subjects, the attitudes and attributes of the participants, the season and the place all present such modifying elements that each venture into conversation is unique.

One person will have impulses to argue and persuade, to hang onto a subject or a person and hate to let go. Vehemence may be his nature and his habit and he has an arsenal arrayed with reasons and demonstrations and facts. Another may have a spirit of affirmation and imperturbability, a softness of touch when it comes to differing and an energetic conviction of feeling immune to logical segmentation. Such a person was Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Emerson wrote to the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., October 8, 1838, in answer to a letter criticizing one of his addresses: ". . . I well know that there is no scholar less willing or less able to be a polemic. I could not give account of myself, if challenged. . . . I do not know what arguments mean in reference to any expression of thought. I delight in telling what I think, but if you ask how I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men."

Some men are determined to differ: Emerson would not. Here is a great temperamental difference of great importance in considering a conversation.

Montaigne said that he never expected to exhaust any subject or topic — "for I never see all of them."

Any man's view of any subject is but a partial view. One converser approaches the subject lovingly and tentatively, as Montaigne phrases it: "Of a hundred members and faces that everything has, I take one, one-while to look it over only, another while to ripple up the skin, and sometimes to pinch it to the bones. I give a stab, not so wide but as deep as I can, and am for the most part tempted to take it in hand by some new light I discover in it." Thus Montaigne, knowing his own limitations, but still relishing his individual capacity for expression, approaches the subjects which life presents to him but without any argumentative arrogance. Following his words is like listening to wise, witty, rambling conversation before a pleasant fire and with a pitcher of fresh apple cider at hand. His approach was always tempered by the question, put to himself, what do I know?

Rabelais, in the author's prologue to his great book, gives a figure appropriate to the approach to conversation — though he is applying it to the reading of books.

Did you, he asks, ever see a dog with a marrow bone in its mouth? "If you have seen him, you might have remarked with what devotion and circumspectness he wards and watcheth it: with what care he keeps it: how fervently he holds it: how prudently he gobbets it: with what affection he breaks it: and with what diligence he sucks it. To what end all this? . . . Nothing but a little marrow." But the marrow is sweet, "a nourishment most perfectly elaborated by nature."

In imitation of this dog, the conversationalist of such a temperament will lovingly and faithfully smell and feel and esteem and pursue gently the subject of his quest.

After his first meeting with Henry James, Sr., in 1843, Thoreau wrote to his friend Emerson describing that conversation. "I never was more kindly and faithfully catechized. It made me respect myself more to be thought worthy of such wise questions. . . . I know of no one so patient and determined to have the good of you. It is almost friendship, such plain and human dealing. I think he will not write or speak inspiringly; but he is a refreshing, forward-looking and forward-moving man. . . . I had three hours' solid talk with him . . ."

Henry James, Sr., was a man of leisure, a man without profession except that of being a seeker, a scholar — and a writer of unread books. He had much time for conversation and he enjoyed a wide range of acquaintances. Most of them would have emphasized one phrase of Thoreau's description — James was a "determined" talker. He was argumentative, analytical, persistent. His spirit was not that of Montaigne, not even that of Rabelais' dog after the marrow bone. More than likely Thoreau was right in thinking that he had been catechized for three hours by James. This process is hardly that of the conversationalist.

The arguer and the catechizer, and there are many denizens of both camps, are anti-conversationalists, for neither kind enters into the group spirit of conversation.

Recently some published extracts from a diary kept by Thomas Butler Gunn have given us a picture of a conversational group in New York of a hundred years ago. Walt Whitman had but recently published the first and second editions of his *Leaves of Grass* and was receiving some attention. The popular woman writer of sentimental moralizing capsules, Fanny Fern — she published *Fanny Fern's Leaves* —, James Parton, and a few others gathered in a Brooklyn home for conversation. Gunn confided to his diary in June, 1856, some remarks on the conversational quality of the people.

Oliver Dyer, he wrote, "is a light haired, dogmatic, conceited man, addicted to talking in a damnable opinionative manner . . ." This temperament and intellectual habit we have all seen illustrated. It might be well to sentence such a person to read the modest but penetratingly vital comments which Montaigne distilled out of his reflection on life.

Gunn gives a thumbnail comment on Walt Whitman: "Walt talks *well* — but occasionally too much, being led by the interest with which his remarks are received into monopolizing the conversation. I, as a rule, would prefer to play listener, yet it is a violation of good taste to find yourself constrained to become one. And nobody wishes to become a bucket to be pumped into, let the stream be ever so nutritious."

Monopolizers of conversation are of many kinds and must in another place be given consideration, but the temperament and habitual pattern toward monopolizing is usually disruptive of the ends sought in conversation.

A final word here should be said about the listener. Gunn has made a good point: it is distasteful to find oneself being constrained to become one. No one does want to be considered a bucket.

But the person who is inclined to describe himself as a listener at conversations is also antagonistic to the spirit of conversation. One says, thinking he is modest and in a way a public benefactor, "No, I don't talk. I just listen. I let the others talk." That attitude may be all right for the audience at a political rally or a Fourth of July oration; but it is not uttered in the spirit of conversation. Conversation has no hitch-hikers. The aura of conversation pulls in all of the persons present into a social group, an entity. Each is an active participant. Each has a personal view of the world. Each is a moving dynamic spirit. If one lacks interest in the world, he might well be expected to absent himself from the conversing group. If one lacks experience in expression, in conversation is the place to get that experience. The one who feels he has a wallflower temperament might be encouraged by reading Emerson's "Self Reliance."

One who has a temperament and intellectual habit toward the mutual exchange of views and insights in the expectation that the whole may be greater than the parts is ready to contribute to conversational success. Moreover his friendships will probably be highly articulate and greatly rewarding.

Will You Please Say a Few Words?

By Ralph N. Schmidt

Dr. Schmidt, of Utica College, returns to our pages with helpful guidance for the citizen who is caught in the dilemma of being suddenly requested to "say a few words."

NO QUESTION STRIKES MORE TERROR into the very soul of decent, law-abiding, church-going, community-serving men and women than the question "Will you please say a few words?" This terror is heightened to the point of petrification when the question is asked publicly and without advance warning. No terror is less deserved and more easily dispelled!

The terror is undeserved because everyone of whom the question is asked has something worthwhile to say to the audience which he is asked to address. The question is not asked of just anybody! To be asked to say a few words is a mark of courtesy and respect. It means that the particular organization or group feels that you have something to say which will be of value to them — which they don't want to miss. This feeling may be engendered by personal knowledge of your capabilities and accomplishments; it may be the result of the position or office which you hold. The important thing is that *they* want *you* to speak!

The terror is quite easily dispelled because there is something you can do about it, in advance! Do you think that the people who are called upon to "say a few words" and who do so with success are giving impromptu speeches? Nothing could be farther from the truth! To be sure, in a few instances, impromptu speeches are delivered — and well — but the number of those instances is so small as to be "statistically insignificant."

The great majority of speakers when called upon to "say a few words" are (1) not surprised at being called upon, and (2) present a speech which has been carefully prepared in advance and which may have been presented many times in the past to similar audiences. *You* need not be surprised, nor need *you* prepare a talk on the spur of the moment!

What are the circumstances under which people are asked to "say a few words?" The most frequent circumstance occurs when you are a visitor. A current or a former official of a fraternal, professional or service club may expect to be called upon to speak when he visits another club — especially if his visit is in an official capacity. Even "just a member" is not exempted from such recognition, particularly if he comes from a rather distant point, or from a club with which rivalry is keen or cooperation is close!

The next most frequent circumstance occurs when you are present at a meeting at which a course of action is being decided. When you are in a position to give helpful advice or pertinent information, you are sure to be called upon! When are you in such a position? When your previous experiences have been with the

same or a similar problem; when your background and education have prepared you to cope with the problem; when you have a reputation for straight thinking and right action!

Other circumstances in which *that* question ("Will you please say a few words?") is likely to occur are: when you return from a trip to another section of the country or from a foreign land; when you, or a member of your family, has received special recognition; when you attend the first meeting of your group after an absence caused by extended illness; etc.

Whether or not the presiding officer or the program chairman warns you in advance that you may be called upon, you should be ready to "say a few words" whenever any of the circumstances mentioned above (and others similar to them) obtain. Not to be ready is to invite disaster and to do yourself personal harm. To be ready is not difficult!

Let us suppose that you are a member of the Optimist Club and you find yourself at the regular meeting of a neighboring Optimist Club. The slogan of your group is "the friend of the boy." No other subject about which to "say a few words" could be more pertinent. You can work out, in advance, the outline for an extemporaneous talk on what your club is doing to promote better conditions for the boys of your community.

Suppose you are an officer of your club or of the province of which your club is a member. You can work out, in advance, the outline for an extemporaneous talk on ways and means found helpful by Optimists in general in promoting better conditions for boys. Another "sure fire" subject is "The Meaning of Optimism" — if given a fresh and unique handling.

Do I hear you object that you don't know how long you will be called upon to speak? The minimum time will never be less than five minutes, and seldom more than 15 or 20. Suggestions have been made in a previous article in this magazine (September, 1957: "How Long Should I Talk, and Why") which will be helpful in preparing for a talk which can be adjusted to a time limit of from 5 to 30 minutes with a minimum of wear and tear on the nervous system and with the maximum of effectiveness.

Every club, every group which has speakers, has a primary purpose which is its reason for being. This purpose, and any secondary purposes, constitute the best source of subjects for prepared and carefully rehearsed speeches to be presented with the illusion of the first time when called upon to "say a few words." Such speeches will be pertinent because they concern the vital interests of your auditors. Such speeches will appear

spontaneous and brilliant. Spontaneous because others will think as you once did — that your speech was on the spur of the moment. Brilliant because you have had the time to polish its very genuine ideas and contributions until, in your presentation, they sparkle like brilliant jewels!

Now let us suppose that you are present at a meeting where a course of action is being decided upon. The subject under consideration is one with which you have some degree of familiarity. You can easily speak when called upon to do so if you will remember and use one of the following patterns: one, two, three; past, present, future; local, area, national; youth, maturity, old age; body, mind, spirit; labor, management, consumer; pro and con; male and female, unmarried and married; newcomers and old timers; state, national, international; geographical, industrial, social; etc.

Suppose the issue is whether or not to engage a "name band" for the annual women's night dinner dance. You could organize your talk around the two or three reasons why you think this would be a good idea, or the two or three reasons why you are opposed to this action. You could point out what has been done in the past, the effect of such action on the present membership (in the present), the probable effect of such action on the organization in the future. You could balance the arguments for and against. You could explain the point of view of the unmarried members of the club as contrasted with those of the married members. Etc.

It is, of course, obvious that not every one of these patterns will fit every topic for discussion. It is doubtful, however, if there is any topic to which several of these patterns cannot be applied successfully!

And finally, what about the "other circumstances" which might result in your being called upon to say a few words? In each of these, it is readily determinable that you might be called upon. It costs comparatively little in time and energy to be prepared to speak. Here you simply combine the suggestions made for the previous two sets of circumstances. You prepare an outline for a speech which will be pertinent to your audience and to the circumstances which may prompt your being called upon. You use that pattern or combination of patterns which will give you the best possible response to the invitation to speak. It is as simple as that!

But what about those occasions on which you are

asked to "say a few words" and you do *not* have 15 or 20 minutes in which to express yourself? What about those instances when the invitation is extended and the amount of time which it is stipulated or expected that you will use is only two or three minutes? Do the suggestions made above apply then? They certainly do, but they do not anticipate every contingency! There are occasions when *impromptu* speeches are called for, speeches for which you could not possibly prepare in advance, speeches which must be made "off the cuff."

The secret in such cases is well known to the experienced speaker and can be readily learned and applied by the individual who is beginning to make his influence felt as a speaker. It is this: Whenever you are present at a meeting, no matter how remote the chances that you may be called upon to speak, stay in tune with the progression of events and ideas which unfold during that meeting! Stay mentally alert. Pay close and careful attention. Don't become engaged in conversation or discussion with others at your table or at your side. React personally and vicariously to each suggestion, proposal, criticism, message, etc. While listening to others, have in mind what you *would* say if you were asked to speak at *this* point of the discussion or program.

Keep in mind the patterns of development suggested above, but anticipate that you will not have the time to develop the full pattern. Hence, in the case of the "past, present, future" pattern, for example, develop only one of these three — the one which you feel is most pertinent at this particular stage of the program or discussion. It would be a sin for you to talk longer than two or three minutes if this is the time allotted to other speakers or if you are called upon to speak as an added item on an already crowded agenda. It would, likewise, be a sin for you to refuse the invitation to speak or to use it to introduce extraneous materials or ideas. By mentally preparing what you *would* say if you were called upon at *this* moment, you are avoiding all three of these sins — and you are sharpening your ability as a listener and evaluator of what others are saying.

One final word of caution — no amount of preparation in advance (or of keeping mentally in tune with the progress of the discussion or program) can compensate for a lack of instruction in effective speaking. But, given such instruction and a modicum of experience in speaking, anyone can speak effectively when called upon to "say a few words."

CHINESE AS TALKERS

"The Chinese are pre-eminently one of the reasoning peoples of the world. They like to think, and because they like to think, they like to talk. In this respect they are like the French. The Chinese like to discuss things; they like to put their ideas down in the form of Confucian dialogues, in novels and plays, and in some of

the longest histories that have ever been written. Only a thinking and articulate people could have produced Chinese philosophy and poetry, which, as all agree, are among the finest productions of the human mind anywhere."

—From, Charles H. Parker, *Dog Eats Moon*, 1950.

SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT SPEECHES

By James M. Lewis

With an A.B. and M.A. from Ohio State University, Mr. Lewis is a candidate for the Ph.D. at Penn State and Assistant Professor of English at the Albany, N. Y., State College.

REMEMBER YOUR LAST SPEECH? Of course you do, and, although your big moment wasn't before the United Nations or the U. S. Senate, it was important. Perhaps they didn't cast your words in bronze or chisel them on marble, but there in the Club minutes it has been recorded for posterity:

Martha Tweedsocket talked about how she killed the bugs in her wisteria. Meeting was adjourned.

or,

By unanimous vote the Club expressed thanks to Albert Gunderhunket for his nice speech on patriotism.

Not world-shaking, but surely you are proud of the job you did. After all, you spent weeks thinking about your topic, gathering information, arranging and rearranging it, and searching through every joke book in the neighborhood (in vain) for "the" funny story to get things rolling. You meticulously constructed an outline that took two days, twenty-eight sheets of paper, and three unnecessary arguments with your wife. You carefully adapted your materials and tirelessly practiced the delivery. Yes, it was worth the effort. You lived up to your responsibility to use the time of your audience wisely. You prepared thoroughly and knew what you were talking about. You had a sincere belief in the importance of your subject and conveyed that feeling to your audience. They felt rewarded, and, unless I miss my guess, you will soon be asked to give another speech. Probably you will accept the invitation — with the attendant difficulties and rewards.

Your experience is not uncommon. You have found that there is no magic formula for effective public speaking. You realize the importance of following the established methods of choosing a topic, selecting main ideas, utilizing supporting materials, outlining the speech, adapting to the audience, etc. Few will question the efficacy of these methods, and that is as it should be.

But let's be realistic. For anyone seriously interested in effective public speaking such knowledge and experience, however necessary, are not adequate. That is, we need to know more than how to prepare a speech a week ahead of time. It is common knowledge that for every speech that we have weeks or even days to

prepare, we make dozens of equally important speeches on the spur-of-the-moment. Although we must make these impromptu speeches virtually every day, few of us feel that we can do it as effectively as we should.

There are many like Al Gunderhunket, who must suppress a shudder when he considers the effectiveness of the report that he presented to the Board of Directors last Tuesday — the one he had less than an hour to prepare. About all that he was able to do was to bring fairly well regulated confusion out of complete chaos. He can make an effective speech after lengthy preparation, but as an impromptu speaker the only talent that he has is for what the French call *esprit de l'escalier* — wit of the stairs. What he should have said comes to him clearly as he climbs the stairs on his way to bed — just three hours too late.

As most of us know, something unfortunately called instruction in impromptu speaking is sold regularly to many unsuspecting students. Some of the "charm" oriented courses in public speaking distribute a product labeled Impromptu Speaking. Their directions are simply to "smile and say anything to fill the allotted time." With neither thought nor purpose such verbal coquetry is meaningless. In a similar category are the ill-prepared teachers who quickly exhaust their inadequate wares and, in desperation, rely on what *they* call impromptu speaking to serve as a convenient hiatus filler. With no sound information or preliminary instruction, all that their trusting students gain from this shoddy maneuver is additional personal experience with possible variations on the theme "uh - er".

Impromptu speaking as perpetrated in the familiar "Aw-Gosh" school of oratory is nothing more than teaching the theory and practice of cliché-stringing. Just look humble, evince a character of modest ignorance, mouth a few unwashed platitudes, and you have fulfilled your obligation. With activities of this kind it is small wonder that instruction in impromptu speaking is often looked upon as an endeavour that is less than intellectually respectable. Of course there are some who teach impromptu speaking effectively, but until they are joined by many others we will have with us too many spur-of-the-moment speakers with nothing to offer except that which Disraeli so aptly called, "the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity."

How should impromptu speaking be taught? Prob-

ably there are many good ways. Over a period of years I have tried various methods of teaching impromptu speaking to college and university students and have developed a system that works well for me. Others who have tried it have reported that it works equally well for them.

I introduce impromptu speaking only after the students have become familiar with the basic principles of extemporaneous speaking in theory and practice. It has been my experience that when an attempt is made to speak impromptu early in the course — when they are still valiantly trying to get their knees stopped and their ideas started — the students are too inept to assume the added burden of effective spur-of-the-moment preparation. On the other hand, after any initial trauma has been overcome and the student has a reasonable mastery of the basic principles and practices of extemporaneous speaking, he can profitably focus his attention and effort on learning impromptu speaking.

A discussion period can be used for explanation and motivation. The students can suggest many situations in which impromptu speaking is necessary. They see that merely because a speech is organized on the spur-of-the-moment it is not, *per se*, less important than one prepared far in advance. It should be clearly understood by all that impromptu speaking is not just "saying anything." It should be pointed out that impromptu speaking is based on the principles that have been previously learned and practiced, but that it differs from extemporaneous speaking in that it imposes stringent limitations on the time available for deciding what to say and for organizing it. Thus, although there is no *specific* preparation of *subject-matter* for an impromptu speech, there is *general* preparation. The speaker has been making such general preparation in all that he has ever done. Obviously, then, the topic of the impromptu speech must be one with which the speaker is very familiar. There will be no time for research and little time for organizing materials.

If the speaker hasn't given much thought to the question of spur-of-the-moment organization he will probably find it difficult when he attempts to organize his material quickly. There are, of course, many patterns of organization used by effective impromptu speakers. I have compiled a list of frequently used patterns of organization ("Idea Organizers") from various sources. This list is distributed to the students in advance of the actual speaking so that they can become familiar with these possibilities for organization long before they are

called upon to speak. They are not, of course, restricted to these patterns, nor is it necessary for them to use them exactly as given. The "Idea Organizers" that I use are:

1. who, what, when, where, why, how
2. what is the problem? possible solutions? best solution?
3. past, present, future
4. theoretically, practically
5. the right way, the wrong way
6. necessary, beneficial, practical (and/or just)
7. the individual, the group
8. local, state, national, international (or other similar divisions)
9. employer, employee, general public (or other group divisions)
10. mentally, morally, physically
11. socially, economically, politically
12. what shall we do first? second? third?
13. the general principle involved (legal, moral, etc.) and relationship to topic
14. probable results if we take this action; if we do not
15. what are the advantages, disadvantages?

For practice in impromptu speaking topics can be assigned on the basis of the speaker's specialized knowledge (an interest or hobby), or, if such information is not available, broad subject areas (courage, success, friendship, etc.) can be used. In either case, the speaker will usually be as well informed on the subject as he will be later in life when he is suddenly asked to "say a few words." The speaker's immediate task will be to narrow the relatively broad subject to a topic that can be effectively adapted to the audience and the occasion and can be adequately covered in the available time. (For classroom use I specify a maximum time limit of four minutes.) Certainly, as in any endeavor of this kind, the intellectual ability of the individual is of critical importance. No magic is involved. The methods described merely assist the speaker to present more effectively what he already knows.

The results achieved with this program have been gratifying. The speaker is presented with a new and realistic challenge which he is given help in meeting. He knows that he is now better prepared to meet a lifetime of spur-of-the-moment speaking situations, as well as those speeches which he can prepare in a more leisurely manner. Can anything less be considered adequate.

What special devices do you use as a guide in your own speaking — or in your teaching of Speech? If knowing them will profit others, why not write them down and send them in?

The Strange Case of Speaker Jekyllhyde

By Edward Palzer

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IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DISCOVER the *Hyde* in Robert Louis Stevenson's character of *Jekyll*. Even then, discovery came only by Jekyll's own admission, in what he said in that mysterious little envelope within the envelope at the very end.

Perhaps at long last some speech instructor likewise may recall his own destructive past, what creative life he has destroyed in the classroom, where he was a carping critic instead of a helpful physician.

When the author was invited to set up the first experimental clinic in stage fright, he came up with a most discomfiting find: *the speech teacher himself is often the cause of the student's tension and blockage to speech*. It was by no means a popular discovery for anyone within the speech teaching profession.

The destructive *Hyde* in speech works for a dampening of the student's spirit, a crushing of his individual creative potential.

But just as in Stevenson's gripping tale, the *destructor* (often called instructor) is eventually destroyed — by himself. For the speech critic finds himself blocked in his own speech effort later on outside of the classroom. Perhaps he imagined that he could be a critic in one place, yet a creator in another. Small wonder that *he*, of all people, presently finds himself fearing that which he would presumably cure. Small wonder that he becomes the speech teacher who is reluctant to speak!

What is this destructiveness which consumes first the student, then the instructor? How does it do that? In this way: non-creative teaching and non-constructive criticism cuts down his own creative potential. This means he has less of that potential when he tries to speak in public. Conversely, his very blockage to public speaking thus becomes an index to the kind of teaching he is doing.

"Why don't *you* make speeches?"

"I've heard too many!" was the retort of a speech professor of many terms.

This invites speculation as to what kind of listening he was doing, why he didn't keep himself in a state of creative aliveness, why he didn't see creative opportunity in his classroom situation.

It is considered standard educational practice to isolate what is to be learned. No doubt this is valuable for purposes of analysis. But in speech there is a great loss in dichotomizing creativity and human relations from the speech exercise.

Awareness of loss through dichotomizing is not con-

fined only to the speech realm. The Bauhaus University under Moholy-Nagy and Gropius also sensed this loss in the arts-crafts field. Accordingly, "concentric or annular growth" became a cardinal point in all exercises. For it could be observed that a tree does not grow branches one year, bark the next, etc. Rather, it is a whole tree (however tiny) from the very beginning.

In the speech realm, the instructor must remember that each speech communication effort involves at least one other human being, and in this sense it must be a completed act.

Therefore, the speech instructor must combine some aspect of human relations with his speech exercise instead of dichotomizing one from the others. Even in such a precise area as speech correction, it might well be remembered that those being corrected "have feelings too," as one student so aptly put it.

The professional musician is aware of the need to round out even a simple exercise in artistic fashion. He will frequently play melodious passages to keep alive his very love of music itself. Indeed, amateurs are sometimes amazed at what he will do with a simple musical phrase, trill, or even a tone.

This idea of keeping *the whole* constantly in mind is even more important for speech communication, because not only artistry but *human relations* itself is involved here. It is moreover an integral and not merely an incidental part of speech.

Not only can an exercise be improperly framed in itself, but the speech coach (especially when time is pressing and the show must go on) may also interfere with the student's development by arresting his communicative-creative cycle. The instructor will quickly excuse this as necessary to call attention to some speech inadequacy or histrionic opportunity. But no matter how valid this may be, the damage is done creatively. For the student has now lost his creative momentum. The prerogative of making his own creative decision has now been usurped by someone else. Some word is the wrong word, some better gesture could be used, the vocal pitch should go up or down. In forensics, such interruption on the part of the coach may mean a loss of the excitement and benefit of following up directly on what the preceding speaker has just said. He is compelled to take "time out" for instruction which could be given later on.

Again a Bauhaus principle is applicable to the speech realm. This time, it is a matter of regaining basic

sensory-biological potency. The arts-crafts student is encouraged by experimentation to let his own senses tell him what is inadequate, and to measure up to his own best before getting outside advice. Then such suggestion would be all the more welcome, and the instructor himself would become a resource person. This shift in role in itself would help to keep the instructor more human and creative, more creatively ready for his own public speech behavior outside of the classroom.

Moholy himself would make no prognosis for the student until that student had made such basic adjustment on his own, and the Bauhaus training schedule permitted up to two years for personal creative adjustment.

At least the speech instructor can permit the student to work out a temporary (but completed) creative solution, and this within an uninterrupted communication cycle involving responsive listeners. And the instructor happens to be on the lot as one of those listeners.

The instructor may be the type who denies creativity to others while reserving it for himself. But when he does this, he runs the risk of forfeiting some of his own creative potential, and possibly of losing his very *feeling* for and *desire* for creativity.

The way in which he handles speech evaluation is not a matter of inconsequence. He may overlook the fact that various aspects of the speech rating chart do not have equal value in every communication situation. One factor could easily outweigh all the rest, either positively or negatively. Further, the elements in the chart are not mathematically computable. And the "composite speaker" is in fact a fiction.

The effect of such fictions and fallacies are of course compounded when the instructor uses them with an air of finality, and when he adds the carping touch to criticism. He would do well to remember that in any event what counts is not the amount of criticism given, but the amount which the student will accept. When the student is encouraged to be his own critic, this acceptance can be something more than a likelihood.

It is inevitable that the instructor develops a "guilt complex" for himself as the result of his own caustic criticism of the student's speech. Thus he becomes reluctant to speak in public himself. He simply cannot match the standard implied by his criticism of the student's speech.

But where that criticism has been really constructive, it involves creative growth for himself as well as for the student.

It is possible that the classroom routine itself may result in a fixation for both teacher and student. Also, it may be that the lesser maturity of the student listener is flattering to the instructor's ego. Then if the same margin of difference does not exist between himself and his adult listener, he becomes reluctant to speak in public. Yet he has only to remember that every individual is another's superior in some way. He can learn as well as teach, and from his classroom experi-

ences he may glean many a lead for that next public speech of his own. This is all the more reason why he should work for a greater unfolding of the student's creative potential in the classroom projects. Although the longer speech is not necessarily an encouragement to deeper research and a more matured creativity, it sometimes can be. It does point up the student's ability to *sustain* and *develop*, which is missing in the very short talk.

Another ingredient which may be missing in the classroom is that of interaction between speaker and listener. Without it, even an experienced public speaker loses his interpersonal sensitivity. Yet he needs that sensitivity to provide for at least *implied* give-and-take, to say nothing of open discussion afterward.

If the speech instructor does not permit such exchange when he is teaching, or when he adopts an overly pedantic routine, he may backslide to a level of inflexibility from which he may not recover in time for that next public speech situation.

He may also find himself blocked from fluid extemporaneous speech because he views the process of communication as a direct 1:1 transfer of his own mental picture to the listener. Thus he is concerned about "tenuous supply lines" in the "transfer" process, and so he clings to his script for fear that some of the precious cargo may be lost on the way.

But this blockage will disappear when he begins to view the communication process more realistically as induced creativity, where the communicator offers clues and raw materials, and the listener reworks these into a new created product of his own. This may indeed approximate the original mental picture of the communicator, but is not identical with it.

A logical corollary to this process is that he would then seek not only to activate the listener's creative potential, but to protect and develop it.

Viewed from this premise of communication, the instructor's forfeiture of his own creative potential and his disregard of the creative potential of the listener in the public audience take on a fresh significance.

Obviously both the forfeiture and the disregard are partly the result of his habitual non-creative classroom speech behavior as an instructor.

One part of the Jekyll-Hyde story lingers on. It is the consternation of Jekyll's attorney when he first saw the will. For it provided that in the event of Jekyll's "disappearance or unexplained absence," all his possessions were to pass to Mr. Hyde.

For some speech instructors, Jekyll the *constructor and creator* has all but disappeared, while Hyde the *critic and destroyer* is indeed the beneficiary. His academic tenure continues regardless of what he is doing in the classroom.

But ultimately he cannot conceal his personal lack of creativity from his public audience on the outside.

So perhaps he would rather slink away and evade the problem of public speaking altogether.

SPEECH BLOCKS—

HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

By Arthur A. Eisenstadt

Dr. Eisenstadt, who conducted our former book review column, is a Speech Correctionist in the Newark, N. J. School system.

ONCE UPON A TIME, OG THE CAVEMAN rose to address a group of his hairy, skin-clad colleagues, and met with all kinds of objections to his proposals on how to catch next winter's meat supply. From that time down to today, there have been woefully many speakers — and almost as many hecklers. Og probably bashed in a few heads, shouted his ideas more fiercely, and went ahead. Or perhaps he was needled so successfully that he stopped, blinked, forgot where he was, and just sat down speechless and mortified. Neither procedure is very satisfactory from the modern point of view. Yet heckling goes grimly on, and speakers are often broken down and defeated by it. What to do? An analytic approach to Public Speaking gives us some good answers. Here they are.

First of all, let's break down the many forms of speech interruptions into three main types: There are a.) impersonal, b.) speaker-generated, and c.) audience-generated speech-stoppers. Impersonal interruptions are those like noisy steam pipes, windows and doors slamming, the roar of a nearby trolley, bus or train, an unexpected horn, whistle or bell which lets loose in highly audible and annoying fashion. Generally, these are of relatively short duration (not always) and are reasonably easy to manage. If they are brief and not especially loud, it is probably best to raise your voice and keep on talking. If they are brief and quite loud, stop talking, put on a pleasant, patient smile, show the audience by your facial expression that you can see the humor of the situation, and go right ahead as soon as the noise stops. If the sounds are likely to remain with you, as in the case of the noisy pipes or the long, long train near the window, stop long enough to request help from the meeting chairman — such as some window or pipe-valve closing — and calmly pick up where you left off. Explanations or apologies to the audience are usually unnecessary—they know perfectly well what happened, and realize that it wasn't your fault. A quick review of your preceding remark is in order if you feel that the chain of thought has been broken.

Speaker-generated interruptions are those which you may yourself create. They include coughing, sneezing, pausing at length for a word or thought, turning or adjusting your papers or — heaven forbid — time out while you find your thoroughly lost place or re-arrange your thoroughly scrambled note-cards. These, too, are usually of short duration, and should be treated with a

minimum of fuss and bother. A cough or sneeze is best ignored or given a pick "pardon," a lengthy pause for thought should be taken for granted by you — and thus by the audience as well — a rearranging of notes or papers should be covered up by some impromptu remarks which either restate or develop the last thing you said before you did lose your place.

In these two types of interruption, two main principles are to be followed: keep the interruption and the repair as brief as possible, and do not become emotionally involved. In the last type to be considered three more principles will be developed, one of them being another aspect of emotional involvement. Now let's examine audience-generated interruptions.

Audience-made speech difficulties are usually termed heckling, meaning a kind of annoyance or badgering of the speaker. In actual practice, they are often nothing of the sort. It is important for the speaker to realize that frequently what may seem like deliberate obstacle-creating, is really an accident, or may be prompted by genuine friendly interest or perplexity. Because a noise, a question, or a remark comes at an awkward moment is no proof that it was designed to embarrass or hamper the speaker. Furthermore, since the speaker has little time to stop and analyze the motives behind the interruption, he may as well take a positive approach and treat it as a friendly incident. In so doing you are more likely to retain your poise and composure, and consequently avoid anger or excitement which would only add to your problem. So treat the question or incident as one with good intent behind it — unless the wording or manner makes hostility or malice an absolutely unmistakable conclusion — and you will be far better off in the long run. Remember that, psychologically speaking, the person who interrupts you is very much a member of the audience in the sense that he belongs to the group to which you, the speaker, do *not* belong. If you treat him roughly or improperly, you run the ever-present risk of offending the entire audience as well. In addition, in the time you take to engage and vanquish the interruptor, you may also succeed in derailing the entire audience from your train of thought — and yourself as well!

And so we perceive two other important principles in handling speech interruption: keep your own good humor, which thereby helps you gain the audience's good will; and always handle the situation in a way

which keeps everyone's thoughts focussed on the ideas and goals of the speech.

What, specifically, are the *forms* of audience-generated interruptions? They most often consist of:

GROUP A	GROUP B
Noisy seat taking	Exclamations of disapproval
Chattering	Comments or objections
Coughs, sneezes, etc.	Questions or challenges
Foot-scuffing	Derrogatory remarks re subject
Creaking chairs	Derrogatory remarks re speaker

It is obvious that Group A is generally unintentional, of short duration, and of an impersonal or undirected nature. On the other hand, Group B interruptions are deliberate, may last for some time, and pose a direct force which counters or challenges the speaker. There are seven specific ways to handle such an interruption. Here they are:

(1) Ignore it. Sometimes, the best thing to do is exactly nothing. Rather than stop your own line of thought, and rather than pause and thereby make it possible for the interruptor to proceed further, go ahead. Simply act as though the remark was either unheard or doesn't merit an answer, and keep on speaking. If this is your choice, do *not* look pained or taken aback, and do *not* glare at the offender. Just keep going along with your remarks, smoothly and without pause.

(2) Postpone it. A remark like, "I'll come to that point in just a moment," or, "That's just what the latter portion of my speech will cover" tells both interruptor and audience that you have heard the question or comment, and plan to deal with it at the proper place in your talk. It is courteous, brief, and allows you to continue your remarks just as you had planned. In addition, it puts the heckler in a very ungracious position, if he interrupts you again after you have just promised to answer him a bit later.

(3) Answer it briefly. When the interruption can be given a short and satisfactory answer right then and there, do so. After all, if your reply simply enlarges a point just made, it may serve to clarify and improve what you have just said. So long as you do not have to break off from another idea you are treating, and if you are sure you can give the answer without backtracking unduly or losing your place, it is probably wise to oblige with a brief answer. Here again is an opportunity to clarify a point, demonstrate your command of the subject, and gain audience good will.

(4) Answer at length. There are times when the interruption reveals to you that your own remarks have been misunderstood, certainly by the interruptor, and very likely by others listening to you. Perhaps you may now see that you assumed a background that your audience does not have, or that a preceding portion requires greater clarification. If you know your subject well — and good note cards can help you keep from going astray here — then a change in plan is advisable. Under these circumstances, go back to the unclear matter, and inform your audience that you are doing so. Restate your starting point, develop your material in greater

detail, with additional data if possible, and conclude with a direct answer to the interruptor. Then announce your next point — the one you were leading up to before the interruption — and continue your speech as originally planned. When calmly and clearly handled, such a lengthy answer can be one of the most helpful parts of your talk.

(5) Use reprimand. If you feel certain that the interruptor is motivated by malice, or if there are repeated interruptions by the same person, direct action may be in order. Calmly and pleasantly point out to the heckler that his remarks are unfair, that simple honesty requires that he give you a chance to present your views, or that his actions are preventing the rest of the audience from hearing what you have to say. Avoid seeming excited or exasperated, and show by your tone and face that you are meeting a nasty situation with good humor and self control.

(6) Appeal to the audience. If the interruption has been violently emotional in tone, or clearly that of a person repeatedly bent on malicious mischief, and it is plain to you *and the audience* that the heckler neither expects nor wants a fair answer, direct counter-action is possible. Since obviously, both *you and the audience* are being blocked by the heckler, you have established the right to direct appeal. Ask calmly that those nearest the troublemaker please prevail on him to stop or leave the group. Point out that both they and you are being kept from the same purpose — that of going further along with the subject — and that with a little help from the audience, you will be able to do the very thing they came for: proceed with your remarks.

(7) Squelch the heckler. For some speakers, when human endurance has reached its limit, the only course which seems open, is to let loose a counterblast. This may take the form of sarcasm — "I had no idea that this talk would become a debate with a learned expert" — or direct personal attack: "Sir, you are nothing but a rude and inconsiderate trouble-maker" — or counter-question: "Just what makes you think that your viewpoint is correct?" In any of these instances, audience rapport and the thread of continuity are very likely to be lost. In addition, you have now begun a dogfight with the heckler at his level, and at the time of his choosing. At best, you will lose time, interrupt your own flow of ideas, and generate excitement and distraction. You will also run the risk of alienating those of the audience who think as the heckler does, or who feel that an objector deserves an answer rather than an attack. Do not overlook the possibility that when you "take on" the heckler, he may prove to be just as eloquent — and certainly noisier — than you, and even go so far, since you thus furnish the opportunity, to deliver an impassioned speech of his own! For these reasons, direct counter-clash with the heckler is risky and to be avoided.

These, then, are the major kinds of speech interruptions and how they may be handled. Boiled down to basics, we may say the following:

a. Consider the probable length of the interruption and the reasons behind it — this understanding helps you keep your poise.

b. Be prepared to treat each interruption on its own circumstances — don't use "pat" solutions blindly.

c. Realize your own goals in handling an interruption — to remain unruffled, to keep the train of thought unbroken, and to keep the audience's good-will.

d. Remember that the smooth handling of interruptions actually clarifies or strengthens your speech and improves your prestige with the audience.

e. Handle interruptions as briefly and tactfully as possible. Word your answers so that the final portion leads right into the point you were making when interrupted — and go right on.

f. Your best insurance against being caught short by a question or heckler is a thorough and sound knowledge of your speech topic. It is much harder to rattle a speaker who *knows* that he knows his subject inside out. Be such a speaker.

When all is said and done, an interruption, especially a deliberate and emotional one, is sudden, unexpected, and a jolt to most speakers. It will probably make you tense and somewhat on edge when it occurs. But tension itself is not unnerving — fear and indecision are. Intelligent use of your subject-knowledge and the techniques here described will tend to replace fear and indecision with "know-how" and confidence. As the ancient saying puts it, "He who knows and knows that he knows, is a leader." Be one yourself when it comes to speaking in public.

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SPEAKING VERSUS WRITING

By Stanley Burnshaw

Presented as a banquet talk to the April meeting of the SAES — "very definitely not for readers' eyes but for listeners' ears" — this discussion leaves the question of "the speaking of poetry" for elaboration in a book which Mr. Burnshaw (editor, poet, dramatist) is preparing. The article is not to be reprinted wholly or in part without the author's permission.

THE OTHER MORNING, when I mentioned to a friend of mine the title of the present paper, he whirled round and shouted: "Why in the world choose *such* a topic to discuss before a group of speech *professionals*?" It was a fair question — and no doubt many of you have been asking it also, but with the courtesy of silence. Why did I choose such a topic? Because of your colleagues. Because of faculty people in any number of colleges: people who have long lived with delightful delusions about the relationship between speaking and writing — delusions that I have often had the undelightful duty of demolishing.

Their thinking can be summarized in a dozen words: "For years," a professor of sociology said to me, "For years I have been giving lectures that have held my classes spellbound — and that have produced excellent teaching results as well. And so I've finally decided to make these lectures into a book. Would you give me a contract?"

When I was young and relatively innocent of educator sensibilities, I would ask the professor if the proposed book was to be composed of *verbatim* transcripts. But then he would instantly take offense at the very idea that his lecture words might not be entirely sacred. And so I tried to mend my ways by suggesting lightly: "Well, you *do* plan to look over the transcripts carefully — perhaps polish a bit here and there?" Unfortunately my subtlety was wasted. For invariably I would be challenged with an unbelieving plaint: "Why change them, why change anything? When they've proved so successful for so many years, why would you *want* to change them?"

Why indeed? Why isn't a splendid lecture also a splendid chapter? Why should one imagine that the words that are so effective when delivered orally in the classroom might not also prove effective when set in type and printed upon the pages of a book? These are the questions whose implications I propose to explore in the next twenty minutes. And these are all that I had in mind when, with I hope pardonable audacity, I called my paper "Speaking *versus* Writing."

It is really "Speaking as against Writing" that describes this discussion, for there is no opposition intended, no thought of which mode is the "better." It is rather a concern with function, with appropriateness, with the

suitableness of two different modes of communication to specific tasks. And, of course, the boundary line between the two modes is not always clear or sharp, for, as we all know, speaking and writing blend into each other at certain points. Nevertheless, the differences are so real and, I believe, so significant for communicative *efficiency*, that they need to be set forth sharply. And to do this we had best utilize a standard device in the process of distinguishing — the construct of two straw men.

They are only part straw — actually, they have very little straw. In fact, I think they are entitled to be called "models," provided that they are properly defined. By "speaking" I do not mean *any* collection of words spoken aloud to an audience. After all, some editorial writers dictate their editorials; and some novelists speak their paragraphs to a secretary; and many poets make humming noises as they compose their lines. But all such words are destined to come alive in a situation of silence: They were technically spoken, yet they are not speech.

What, then, do we mean by speaking? and what by writing? First, what kind of words? We mean *ordinary* prose — not the prose of short stories, or novels, or plays. And not the speech of poetry (with which, incidentally, we must deal later, because of the unique relationship between poetry and speaking). We mean the speaking and writing of *ordinary* prose of exposition, of discussion, of information, sometimes of persuasion, and the like. We mean *non-literary* prose, though we may expect both our speaking and writing to possess distinctions and even occasional graces of their own.

What do we mean by speaking? We mean the sentient, interpersonal relationship between a live man or woman and live men and women in his audience — as contrasted with the, as it were, "half sentient" relationship of the isolated reader with his printed page. We mean the physical sounds and feel and sight — as opposed to the silence surrounding the reader. A speech is a drama acted in time, space, flesh, air, light — as distinguished from the closet drama enacted in the hidden rooms of a reader's solitary mind. Or to put this in other terms, we can refer to two different social contracts tacitly assumed by the parties in each situation — to the two different patterns of expectation.

The reader faces a set of printed letters, which he can abandon at will, some of which he can re-read, some of which he can skip — he is completely free. The listener, on the other hand, has entered into obligations. For he has surrendered himself to a *social* situation — he cannot make the speaker repeat or skip or stop. For something is happening before his eyes and ears. A concrete event is taking place and he cannot be absolutely sure of the outcome. The speaker of even the most diligently prepared or memorized address always faces an essentially unpredictable situation, for he is about to engage in a living event. Something unanticipated might happen that will affect *what* he says, *how* he says it, and *what* comes across to his listeners. By contrast, the words and acts mediated by the printed page are always a foregone conclusion so far as the *writer* is concerned. The words are embalmed in print.

If I seem to be belaboring the obvious, I do so deliberately. For nothing distinguishes the speech so much as this quality of aliveness and spontaneity — the sounds, gestures, of a warm, living human presence, of a human event about to happen. I stress this aliveness, unpredictableness, spontaneity, because they are the sources of all the significant differences between speaking and writing.

What, then, are these differences and how significant are they? It does not help to be told, by Joshua Whatmough,¹ for example, that the "symbolism" of "speaking and writing are not the same." This is all too general. To understand the differences in a *fruitful* way, we need to be unashamedly specific. And nobody, to my knowledge, has attempted to do this in any extensive fashion. The subject fairly cries out for doctoral dissertations!

As I see the relationship between speaking and writing, there are three incontrovertible differences. And the first has to do with word-order, in its broad meaning.

The word-order of speaking is not only different from the word-order of ordinary prose writing, but it even produces its own linguistic logic. This statement will not surprise you if you happen to be familiar with Professor Vendryes' classic study of language, which first appeared in Ogden's *History of Civilization* series. Somewhere toward the middle of the volume,² Vendryes analyses the consequences of affectivity upon language and linguistic structures, and especially upon word-order. "Apart from technical and scientific language," he observes, "the expression of an idea is never free from some emotional tinge," but affectivity in its most distinctive form quite naturally is found in spoken language . . . when, as he says, "words gush out of the mind spontaneously."

Now, what do we find in the language typical of speech? I quote: ". . . the elements that the written tongue endeavours to combine into a coherent whole seem to be divided up and disjointed — the order is entirely different. The ideas are arranged in accordance

with the subjective importance that the speaker gives them or wishes to suggest to his listener, rather than with the objective rules of an orthodox process of reasoning." Thus: "where the written language makes use of subordination, spoken language makes use of juxtaposition." Being comparatively "flexible and nimble, spoken language indicates the bond between the different clauses in the briefest and simplest way. The striking words are placed prominently. Sometimes a word or a part of a sentence is flung out in advance of the sentence, without being taken up again in the form of a morphological element such as a particle or a pronoun; sometimes it is relegated to the end and isolated from the content with no anticipatory announcement in the body of the sentence; and sometimes, even, the continuity of the sentence is abruptly broken, and the second half is evolved on a new plan without reference to the first."

These, then, are some of the things that speakers who are, as we say, "full of their subject," can do to grammatical prose. To the writer, such practices are violations of the most horrendous kind — the handbooks have frightening names for them, from *anacoluthon* down. And yet an effective speaker will use these deviant devices as a matter of course. And why should it be otherwise? For the spontaneous, living event that is a speech must reflect the word-order and linguistic logic of spontaneousness and aliveness.

Not all speeches, of course, reveal all the characteristics of word-order and linguistic structure to which Vendryes refers, for they are not all equal in degree of affectivity. Nevertheless, they all *tend* to create a word-order and a word-logic of their own. Moreover, one could provide additional instances of rhetorical and syntactical deviations which are not in the least traceable to the affective element. I have in mind, for example, the common use — perhaps over-use — of apposition, for purposes of clarifying, explaining, reinforcing. Or the various modes of restatement, recapitulation, repetition, reprise. These practices — which would be impossibly irritating and insufferably patronizing in written prose — are quite naturally and generously utilized by an effective speaker; for he knows it is essential to keep his listeners with him. In his zeal to hold their attention and communicate his message, he constantly reshapes word-order and word-logic. Of what relevance are the handbooks of writing to him? He is bent on delivering his message and he "will be heard."

My second proposition may strike you as less agreeable, yet it is merely another one of the facts in the life of speech. To put it inexactly, speaking cannot communicate so much intellectual content as can writing. That is to say, there is a marked difference in intellectual density between the two modes of communication.

I am not thinking of an engineer who reads a paper before an audience of his peers, or of a professor of French who gives an *explication de texte* in a seminar at

an MLA meeting. I mean, quite simply, that a writer can make far greater demands upon the assimilative powers of a reader's mind than can a speaker upon the assimilative powers of a listener's mind.

The reasons are not hard to discover. Some lie in the respective patterns of expectation. Both listener and reader must re-process the verbal symbols that they ingest, but the reader is in a mental set for much stouter mental exertion. He is not so relaxed as the listener, who sits back as he watches somebody else do the work. The reader has to do the work for himself, whereas the listener, even in the most solemn of situations, is being entertained — in the sense that the real burden is borne by somebody else: the speaker.

The speaker has more than a single burden. One of them (which, by the way, is not inconsiderable) has nothing to do with his message. It is composed of the many things that fight against the listeners' pure attention and that therefore reduce further their capacity for hardy intellectual exertion. I have in mind distractions of every type, from adventitious physical noises and a multiplicity of physical discomforts to listener fatigue and the varieties of attention lag. The speaker's *second* burden is, of course, the "burden" (in the Old English sense) of his talk: the ideas that he wishes to communicate.

In such a complex situation of difficulties and distractions, both extrinsic and intrinsic, just how much intellectual content *dare* a speaker try to communicate? Incomparably less than a writer — who may indeed lose his readers. But if he loses them, he doesn't know it. And the reader can always return with refreshed attention after a nod. But the speaker, if he detects the signs of flagging attention, must do something remedial at once and with deceptive skill. And if he suddenly decides to telescope three points into one or to jettison several important ideas, he cannot be blamed. For if he doesn't, he may end up with even greater intellectual losses than these.

My third point concerning the differences between speaking and writing grows out of the one I have just discussed. There are significant differences not only in intellectual density but also in intellectual subtlety: in the refinement of ideas. If my picture of the speaker's burdens is near the truth, if he is indeed weighed down by all the pressures I have mentioned — if, in short, he may at times be forced to telescope or jettison whole ideas — then he can scarcely hope to waft along his listeners on the threads of intellectual delicacy. A writer, on the other hand, can indulge in nuances to his heart's content. All he has to do is to set them before his readers: If the readers miss them, they can always re-read, turn back to a clause or a paragraph, or perhaps catch them on the third or fourth reading. But in the one-time encounter that is the speech, no such possibility exists. If the nuances, if the subtleties, are lost, the speaker cannot re-present them.

To be sure, there are certain modes of refinement

that only the speaking voice can produce — shadings of emphasis, verbal musicalities, and symbolic stresses of the most delicate kind. In possessing these, the speaker has a unique advantage over the writer. But the writer can more than match it with a homologous advantage of his own. I have in mind the plural meanings that an unpronounced word possesses, the double and triple and quadruple *entendres* that often endow a piece of prose with richness of signification. The New Critics make much of this power under their almost infinitely capacious category of "ambiguity." And no doubt this entire area of subtlety of feeling and of idea must be recognized as lying quite outside the scope of the speech.

If my speculations are valid, then speaking and writing are significantly different in at least three respects — in the order and syntax of language, in the weightiness of intellectual content, and in the degree of intellectual refinement. At once someone will protest that none of these differences is valid in the one supremely literary and supremely subtle and intellectually rich area of speech: poetry. For poetry, it will be argued, although printed as written, is always intended to be heard.

Is it? Why? A great many people insist that this is so. Is it because Homer's and indeed all the great folk epics were spoken aloud? Public recitation of *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* was not merely a custom in Greece; it was also an occupation carried on by professionals. But this was not true of Greek poetry only. It was equally true of other literary forms. Herodotus read his *History* aloud in Athens; and from his time to the seventh century, says Toynbee,³ "a public recital to a select audience by the author himself was the ordinary method of publication." But will anyone argue today that Herodotus' *History*, for example, was a speech and does not belong to written literature?

If we apply the touchstone of word-order, we find poetry to be similar to speech in that both differ markedly in this regard from ordinary prose. You may remember Coleridge's famous list of contraries in which he says, among other things, that poetry has "more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order."⁴ In our own day, Paul Valéry remarked that "the words [in poetry] are no longer the words of free practical usage; they are no longer held together by the same attractions."⁵ And another French poet, still productive in his eighty-ninth year, goes so far as to insist that it is in the very word-order of affectivity that the poetry ultimately inheres.⁶

But we can not press the similarity too far, for poetry, quite obviously, is not *merely* speech. Nor is it *merely* writing; for it does not come to life until it is "heard" in a certain way. Hence, although it is actually a language written down, it is also a special type of speech. It is speaking heard, not through the ear as speech is heard, but taken in by the eye to be heard in the mind. But not merely to be heard. For it is both inner hearing and inner speaking — in sum, a written language

that is speaking-singing in the silence of the reader's thought.

Now some of you may be wondering how I dare to make such statements in these days when poets are traveling all over the land giving public recitals and when recordings by T. S. Eliot and others are selling like hot cakes? I think it extremely important — and especially for professionals in oral interpretation — to examine these questions coldly. For they involve a widespread fallacy concerning the destination of poetry: the fallacy that maintains that "the only true way to read a poem is to hear it aloud."

Reading a poem to oneself and listening to someone else recite it are two wholly different experiences. And in many respects the second — listening — is much less rewarding than the first. Nowadays in particular we can hear poets reading their own poems aloud from the platform and somehow we assume that the poet is better qualified than anyone else to read his own poems. But nothing could be more mistaken. Plato was not the only one who insisted that poets frequently miss the import of their own creations. A contemporary critical school⁷ goes even further by warning us against attributing to a writer any specific set of intentions, for (as they tell us) when we fall prey to this "intentional fallacy" we diminish our chances of fully experiencing the work itself. But all literary theorizing aside, is there any reason to think that the ability to *create* a fine poem necessarily endows the poet with the ability to *recite* it wonderfully well? These are two entirely unrelated talents, dispensed from two entirely different heavenly springs.

Furthermore, there is something about a poet's *public* recital that militates against his role as the maker of the poem. Despite his best intentions, he cannot fail to become a platform performer of a sort — a person who must somehow "win over" his audience . . . by being an actor or, to use a less complimentary word, by assuming a special pose. But poetry is not acting and it is not platform performance. Dylan Thomas was blessed with a marvelous speaking voice, but other poets, considerably his superior as writers, proved far less gifted physiologically — and therefore their performances are less memorable and therefore also their poems come through a poor second. Such consequences are inevitable when the *performance* becomes confused in the minds of the listeners with the *poetry* — as it must. For one naturally tends — wrongly — to equate excellence of performance with excellence of poems.

But there are even more serious limitations to the public speaking of poetry — limitations in the experience of the person who wishes to "get" the poem in all its fullness. Certain poems are simply unrecitable. And some are only a little better. Wallace Stevens' recent recordings proved a disappointment not because of the verse itself — among the best of our time — but, to quote one sympathetic reviewer, because "Stevens' work simply does not yield itself easily to aural assimilation."⁸ Nor does the work of many other ex-

cellent poets, especially those who telescope images or who for other sins qualify as "difficult." For the *total* experience of many poems depends also on *visual* elements — we see at a glance the stanza patterns; we get set for the pattern of sound. With some more than with others, but with all to some extent. And then there are also many poems so involved typographically that to hear them without seeing them is to miss at least half the point. I think of Mallarmé's *Coup de Dés*, of Cummings, of many sixteenth-century poets. We have long been "listening" to poetry with our eyes.

But even with poems that do lend themselves to aural assimilation: with such poems the mere *listening* is an impoverished experience. For a reciter can give you only one interpretation at a time, one pattern of verbal emphasis; and this is the very opposite of what poetry inherently offers. It is a travesty of the very nature of poetry — this one-string interpretation. I recall listening to a woman who had come up to Robert Frost at the end of one of his lectures to ask if a certain poem of his meant such-and-such. Frost nodded. Then another woman said, "But I always thought it meant such-and-such." Frost said, "Yes, it does." Then a third and then a fourth came up with still other "meanings," and Frost assured each of them that the poem also meant those things. . . . And of course it must; for poetry is the most condensed form of thinking and of writing: its hallmark is multiple meaning. *And multiple meaning is precisely what can never be communicated in a single recital, with its single pattern of emphasis.*

When I discuss this pure fact with people who are shocked and horrified — as many of you must be — all I can do is to reach out for a faithful analogy. I usually ask my listener if he would prefer to hear a Beethoven symphony played by a violinist rather than by a symphony orchestra, even by the most magnificent violinist in the world. And when I am told not to take refuge in analogies, I cite contemporary scripture in the person of T. S. Eliot, who reminds us that "a poem may appear to mean very different things to different readers, and all of these things may be different from what the author thought they meant. The poem means more, not less, than ordinary speech can communicate."⁹

Am I suggesting that teachers of oral interpretation hand in their resignations? Hardly. For a satisfactory oral interpretation of a poem requires a type of literary study that has no superior; indeed, one might believe that unless a person prepares thoroughly to speak a poem aloud, he will not discover all the regions of its richness. People used to smile patronizingly at the idea of assigning a poem to be memorized. But memorization need not be a chore or a mechanical word-getting.

In memorizing a poem, one can literally get the poem by heart — and if you have got it by heart, then there is nothing further possible. For once the poem is had by heart, one can begin to hear not only its multiple significations but the reverberations — the "resonances"

(Continued on Page 34)

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SPEECH- EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia, as in the United States, educators are giving continuing study to the question of what constitutes essential education. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Hedley Yelland, Director of Secondary Education for New South Wales, a committee of teachers has worked out a new statement of educational philosophy, released June 13, 1958, relative to the significance of Speech in the schools. It is presented here for its general interest to us all.

THE ACTING MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, Mr. J. M. McMahon, has announced that an intensified campaign for speech improvement is to be conducted in secondary schools administered by the New South Wales Department of Education. For some considerable time a Speech Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor A. G. Mitchell of the Sydney University and representing the Education Department, the Inspectorate, the Teachers' Federation, the schools and the Teachers' Colleges, has been at work on a Speech Handbook which it is proposed to issue to all Departmental secondary teachers. The Handbook contains a complete and detailed policy, a programme of speech education, and chapters for the guidance of teachers in putting the programme into effect.

The policy (a complete copy of which is attached) represents a considerable change from the conventional approach to speech. Hitherto what has been known as "speech training" has tended to concentrate on voice and diction and, by requiring pupils to practice certain mouth and tongue exercises, to produce isolated sounds regarded as "correct" or "pure." Emphasis has been placed upon individual specialized excellence in public speaking, elocution or stage performance. A "cultivated" accent has been accepted as the sign of good speech.

The new approach, while not ignoring the necessity to correct individual voice defects by means of suitable therapy, rests upon the belief that speech education must be realistic. It therefore avoids any attempt to force speech into a common mould and concentrates on encouraging the pupil to express himself, in everyday situations, with ease, naturalness and lack of affectation. The aim is effective speech, and effective speech is defined as speech which is audible, intelligible and pleasant to listen to. The compilers of the Handbook believe that many Australian children already speak quite effectively and they do not share the often expressed opinion that Australian speech is universally poor. Nevertheless help will be given to those who are careless or slovenly in their utterance, and particularly to those who are nervous and self-conscious about speaking.

A good deal of attention has been given to producing situations in which the pupil will want to use his voice

and will recognize for himself how important it is to use it well. Instead of asking him to practice meaningless exercises the teacher will encourage him to join in class forums, debates, dramatic work, real-life situations, verse-speaking and similar activities involving oral communication. Where the pupil has to compose for himself what he has to say he will be taught how to arrange and express his thoughts in a sincere, logical and natural way. Stress will be placed on the speech model set by the teacher and on the fact that, as effective speech is basic to all lessons, its production is a common responsibility. It is expected that by these means speech, which is the chief medium for the communication of ideas, which is bound up with one's work, social relations and cultural activity, and which is so closely related to the development and expression of one's personality, will be placed in the forefront of education.

POLICY

No educational need is more obvious than speech education. Speech is for everyone the most commonly used means for the communication of ideas. Nothing is more clearly bound up with the everyday needs of life in work, in social relations and in cultural activity.

Yet speech training has a bad name with teachers and pupils alike. It is thought to be unreal, artificial, exaggerated, leading to stiffness and unnaturalness in speaking. Many boys think it cissy. It has failed to appeal because it tries to go against the face of settled habit and common custom.

There are many reasons for this odd contradiction. Attempts have been made to impose upon Australian children a way of speaking that was not natural to them, even precious and affected. Speech education has been based not upon the actual speech habits of Australians, but upon some vague and unreal notion of correctness and purity. Emphasis has been placed upon individual specialized performance in public speaking, elocution or stage performance.

This Handbook rests upon the belief that there is an obvious need for speech education in the schools, and that in the planning of a programme of speech education the basic needs of clarity and acceptability in oral

communication in the many situations in daily life in which the need arises, must come first. More specialized sorts of training, though not left out of account and not under-valued, must be kept in proper perspective. The Handbook places the needs of all before the needs of the comparatively few with special interests. In particular it does not attempt to force the training appropriate to the few upon the many. The Handbook, further, rests upon the belief that speech education must be realistic. This means for one thing that it must be based upon clear knowledge of the characteristics of Australian speech. The Handbook tries to avoid artificiality, pedantry and dogmatism.

The general policy to be followed in speech in our secondary schools has hitherto been expressed as a comparatively minor part of the programme in English language and literature. From time to time supplementary notes prepared for the guidance of the teacher by the Standing Advisory Speech Committee, have been issued in the Education Gazette. It now appears necessary to re-examine the speech programme and state it in such terms as will leave teachers in no doubt as to what their objectives should be and where their responsibilities lie. At the same time, as few secondary teachers have any extensive training in speech, it is necessary to provide them with guidance and advice as to the means of achieving these objectives.

Partly because of its bulk but largely because speech is considered to be a common responsibility rather than the preserve of the English teacher, this re-statement of speech aims and methods is separated from the English syllabus and presented as a separate unit. As will be seen in a later chapter, the English teacher is still regarded as having a special field of responsibility in speech, but all other members of the staff will be expected to undertake suitable sections of the work. It is not at present proposed to appoint speech specialists except in an advisory capacity.

Much of what has been stated about speech in the English Syllabus is incorporated in the chapters that follow: we are still concerned with "language as a means of transmitting thought" and the development of readiness and facility in the use of language. We still believe that "in oral, as in written work, good sense is the basic requirement" and that pupils must learn "to think, to select those ideas that are relevant, and to arrange them in logical order." "Insincerity and mere glibness" are still to be guarded against. Clear thinking and clear speaking are basic requirements. Correctness in grammar must be sought.

The attitudes and methods mentioned in the notes that supplement the English Syllabus are still, in general, regarded as sound. Thus "success will depend largely on the teacher's ability to persuade his pupils that a lesson is a co-operative undertaking, calling for their active participation under his leadership. This, in turn, will make heavy demands on his judgment, tact, and sympathy." "The teacher will be careful that his

own high standard sets an example and encourages the growth of good habits in thought and expression. He will be quick to grasp, or, if necessary, to make, opportunities for his pupils to speak, and will exploit those opportunities in whatever way seems most promising. He will strive to secure general participation and will be mindful that, for some pupils, the contribution of a single idea may be an achievement."

Although statements of aim and method such as these might find general acceptance, they do not constitute a programme and they do not provide the specific guidance that is generally desired for speech work in our secondary schools. There exists a great deal of doubt as to why and how speech is to be taught. Some questions that puzzle teachers have never been satisfactorily answered. Is there a standard of "correctness" which can be defined and aimed at? Does accent matter? Is what is said more important than the way it is said? Is Educated Australian better than Broad Australian? What constitutes attractive speech? What is effective speech? Should we consider the aesthetic value of speech? Must sentences always be complete, and what is a complete sentence anyhow? Is grammar a main consideration? Can speech faults be defined and tackled in the classroom? What are the defects that need clinical treatment? Should speech be a "subject for examination"? Is slang permissible?

Insofar as these and other questions on speech can be answered, an attempt has been made in this Handbook to answer them. Inevitably most of the answers are based on opinion and with some of that opinion there will be disagreement. Speech is a highly individual and personal attribute and in laying down a policy to be adopted in State schools the Education Department must as far as possible recognize individual taste, attitude and need while at the same time giving teachers guidance that is clear and unequivocal.

As a fundamental consideration it might be stated that, as speech is the commonest form of communication and the commonest means of the expression and development of the personality, activities designed to make speech more effective must be kept in the forefront of our educational programme. Every pupil must be given the opportunity to use his voice in an environment, physical and psychological, that will enable him to use it most effectively. This means that he must not only be encouraged or allowed to speak but that he must be shown how best to speak.

It would be wrong, however, to think that the aim is uncontrolled talk for the sake of breaking silence. Discipline in speech is as necessary as in any other educational activity and it can be applied in various ways. While with the nervous or self-conscious pupil a teacher might be satisfied, at first, with almost any sort of oral communication, halting, barely audible, illogical, ungrammatical, colloquial, monotonous, it will be his responsibility gradually and sympathetically to apply certain controls. Moreover these controls must be applied

in such a way that they will not only avoid hindering the flow of speech but will actually increase fluency.

The nature and extent of controls must be considered: undoubtedly the first must be that of sincerity, truth and reason. There is a place in society, perhaps in the classroom, for idle chatter, half-meant, humorous, sometimes nonsensical, and we have no intention of producing a race of young people who never say anything that is not weighty and serious. But, when the situation is one of normal communication, the pupil must learn to speak from knowledge, commonsense and reason, to think before speaking, and to present his thoughts in logical order, drawing such conclusions as the facts warrant. This requires teaching and conscious effort; it cannot be expected to grow with mere practice in speaking.

The control of language is important. There must be enough words of the right sort and they must be put together in the most suitable way. This means the acquisition, by reading, listening, writing and talking, of an adequate vocabulary. Many pupils not only have a small vocabulary much of it slang, but they use it carelessly and with little effort towards significant or effective arrangement of ideas. This again must be taught and, while written composition may help, written English differs so vastly from spoken English that no great carry-over can be expected. Pupils will need to apply the test of audience reaction to what they say. They will learn to recognize the power and the satisfaction of words well-chosen and well-integrated. They will learn, too, that while the good speaker does not always frame complete sentences and, according to the nature of the occasion, uses or avoids slang, he will, if he wishes to express his meaning with precision, respect the rules of grammar.

At this point the question arises as to the aesthetic value of the spoken word. It might be argued that we should encourage pupils so to choose, arrange and deliver words that the effect is beautiful or attractive. There can be no doubt that, as individuals, we find the

speech of some people more pleasing than that of others. There are various reasons for this, some physical, some psychological, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to set up standards of "beautiful" speech to which all pupils might be encouraged to aspire. In any case there is always the danger of introducing an element of preciousness into speech and allowing it to become a "performance," an end in itself, instead of a means to the end of communicating thought. If a pupil discovers that by using certain words, sounds, rhythms, he can convey a thought or feeling effectively, their use will appear to him a legitimate means to an end. In reading poetry and prose or acting in a play, the voice will of course be used with more conscious artistry than in normal speech, but even there the meaning of what is being said is the chief consideration.

Nothing creates more controversy in speech education than the question of a standard accent. This matter is taken up more fully later, but here let it be said that it is not the policy of the Education Department to attempt to set a standard of acceptability and require teachers and pupils to conform to it. Even if it were possible to define such a standard we consider that it would be undesirable to apply it. Throughout Australia there is in fact no great diversity of accent and, unless a pupil develops personal idiosyncrasies so marked that he becomes unintelligible to others, he should be allowed to adopt the accent that best suits his needs.

It is true that what is vaguely described as a "cultivated" voice has a certain social and even economic value. It is possible, in most cases, to produce this cultivation and pupils who feel the need of it are entitled to acquire it. Nevertheless it is the duty of the school to stress the more important attributes of effective speech: having something to say, arranging your thoughts before uttering them, choosing the most suitable language, speaking clearly, intelligibly and with such qualities of voice as are most appropriate to yourself, your meaning and the people to whom you are speaking.

THE HISTORICAL GRAMMAR OF GESTURING

"Everyone is aware how strongly the gestures of the hands, expressions of the face and eyes and body reinforce the spoken exchange of thoughts and feelings. But not everyone is conscious how much the imitative and indicative gestures are subject to the various habits and usages of language communities. They, too, have a kind of historical grammar; and the natural spontaneity of such movements of expression of communication and representation are deeply enmeshed in a system of rules that is continually developing and changing. Old French gestures differ from those of modern French; and if our powers of observation had been better trained, we

should merely from the attitudes of the faces and bodies of speakers and without hearing a single word, be able to tell their country and the nation by which their mimic language has been trained. An attempt has recently been made to regard even the permanent facial expression, the physiognomy in its typical form, as a product of the mimic and articulatory habits of language. Thus the Frankian face is different from the Suabian, not because of a difference of race, but because in different languages motor habits have become fossilized, as it were."

—From, Karl Vossler,

The Spirit of Language in Civilization, pp. 89-90.

EMERSON ON ELOQUENCE

By William S. Tacey

Mr. Tacey, Professor of Speech, University of Pittsburgh, has undertaken to "systematize" the valuable but random views of America's greatest rhetorician.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON IS BEST REMEMBERED as a prolific writer of essays, many of them, such as "Compensation," familiar to every school boy of an earlier generation. He is also remembered as a passionate Abolitionist, who in the pre-Civil War period wielded his voice and pen in the interests of the enslaved Negroes of the South. Not so well remembered is that he was a lecturer of note, a speaker who was much in demand when a speech of depth and discernment was wanted.

As a boy and young man eloquence had been his idol, and with other youths of Cambridge he had gone on every chance to hear famous speakers of the day, including fiery Southern Senators. He, himself, had won Harvard's Boylston prize for excellence in speaking. Lowell, his contemporary, was to say later, "I have heard some great speakers . . . , but never any that so moved and persuaded men as he."

His two essays on "Eloquence"* were originally prepared as speeches designed for specific audiences, which was the source of most of his essays. The first lecture on eloquence was given to the Boston Mercantile Library Association in February, 1847. He looked upon this situation as being an opportunity "for painting in fire my thought, and being agitated to agitate." Emerson concluded his first lecture on eloquence by defining the art as "the best speech by the best soul."

Mr. Emerson's second discussion of eloquence was first delivered as a speech in Chicago in 1857, and on later occasions in Boston and elsewhere. In the twenty years intervening between his first and second essays on eloquence he had continued his own speaking, and had not forsaken the love of the study of rhetoric, nor of listening to famous orators. Among his contemporaries whom he frequently heard were Senator Daniel Webster, skilled both in forensic oratory and the occasional address; Rufus Choate, noted for his supreme skill in the courtroom; and Edward Everett, remembered as the "other" speaker at Gettysburg when Lincoln delivered his immortal address. Emerson ranked Everett as perhaps the greatest orator of his generation. Later Webster was to be elevated, in his opinion, to a position at least equal to that of Everett.

* In *Society and Solitude, and Social Aims*.

THE USES OF ORATORY

Emerson's enthusiasm for oratory and eloquence grew until he was able to call the latter "a triumph of pure power"† and "better than any battle." He recognized its practicality for its use in government, but cautioned that "it is eminently the art which only flourishes in free countries." Advocates are needed, not alone for the service of government, "but also the vast interests of property, public and private, of mining, of manufacturing, of trade, of railroads, etc. . . . So of education, of art, of philanthropy."

"If there ever was a country where eloquence was a power," he continued, "it is the United States. Here is room for every degree of it . . . compelling the best thought and noblest administrative ability that the citizen can offer. . . . Is it not worth the ambition of every generous youth to train and arm his mind with all the resources of knowledge, of method, of grace and of character, to serve such a constituency?"

THE NATURE OF THE ORATOR

Out of one's training in the hurly-burly of life and the schools come a good voice, winning manners, plain speech, "chastened however, by the schools into correctness," but these in themselves are insufficient. The main matter is to "know your fact; hug your fact. For the essential thing is heat, and heat comes of sincerity. . . . Eloquence is the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak." One marshalls his power as does a general, and like the general wins by superior tactics. In this we note the need for the inner fire, the firm conviction: "What is said is the least part of the oration. It is the attitude taken, the unmistakable sign, never so casually given, in tone of voice or manner, or word, that a greater spirit speaks from you than is spoken to in him." An important qualification is next repeated: "But I say, *provided your cause is really honest* . . . Will you establish a lie? You are a very elegant writer, but you can't write up what gravitates down."

In addition to being a substantial personality, the orator must have "power of statement, — must have

† All quotations are from Emerson's essays on "Eloquence."

the fact, and know how to tell it. . . . In every company the man with the fact is like the guide you hire to lead your party up a mountain, or through a difficult country." But knowledge of fact is not sufficient by itself, one must have "method, which constitutes the genius and efficiency of all remarkable men." It is possible that the orator will have no more information than his hearers possess, "yet he teaches them to see the thing with new eyes. . . . His mind has some new principle of order. . . . Such a power was Burke's, and of this genius we have had some brilliant examples in our own political and legal men."

But the foregoing are but the "gymnastics, the education of eloquence, and not itself." Among the necessary qualifications Emerson begins "with *manliness*; and perhaps it means here presence of mind." He goes on to discuss how necessary a component this is when the speaker finds himself under emotional pressure. To accomplish it he recommends that one learn in the rough and tumble school of life. "In England they send the most delicate and protected child from his luxurious home to learn to rough it with boys in the public schools." (How favorably Emerson would have looked upon the decision of Elizabeth and Philip to send Prince Charles to just such a school!)

A ranking of speakers places lowest "the glib tongue and cool self-possession of the salesman." Next is "the petty lawyer's fluency," only slightly exceeded by the schoolmaster who is "only one lesson ahead of the pupil." The "mischievous member of Congress" adds only "a little sarcasm and prompt allusion to passing occurrences." To these he adds the "coaxing of the auctioneer" and cautions that such habits of oratory are "apt to disqualify them for eloquence."

Emerson subscribed to the theory that great occasions make great men, that out of eras spring superior people, noting that the dramatic genius of the Elizabethan age culminated in Shakespeare; that only in Caesar's lifetime were there great orators in Rome. "But I should rather say that when a great sentiment, as religion, or liberty, makes itself deeply felt in any age or country, then great orators appear."

For triumph in the art of oratory there is required "a reinforcing of man from events, so as to give the double force of reason and destiny." For every instance of true eloquence there has been "some crisis in affairs." This crisis seizes on the man and engages him to the cause he pleads. "For the explosions and eruptions, there must be accumulations of heat somewhere, beds of ignited anthracite at the centre. And in cases where profound conviction has been wrought, the eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly drunk with a certain belief. . . . Add to this concentration a certain regnant calmness, which, in all the tumult, never utters a premature syllable, . . . and the orator stands before the people as a . . . power to whose miracles they have no key."

"The several talents which the orator employs, the splendid weapons which went to the equipment of

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Demosthenes, . . . of Fox, of Pitt, of Patrick Henry . . . deserve a special enumeration." "Statement, method, imagery, selection, tenacity of memory, power of dealing with facts, of illuminating them, of sinking them by ridicule or by diversion of the mind, rapid generalization, humor, pathos, are keys which the orator holds; and yet these fine gifts are not eloquence, and do often hinder a man's attainment of it. *And if we come to the heart of the mystery, perhaps we should say that the truly eloquent man is a sane man with power to communicate his sanity.*"† For a man who is not sane, or one who is immoral may be possessed of these same talents and "have an equal power to ensnare and mislead the audience and the orator." But when these talents are "subordinated and serve him" we see a man who, "in prosecuting great designs, has an absolute command of the means of representing his ideas . . . , never for an instant warped from his erectness." From such a speaker "there is for every man a statement possible of that truth which he is most unwilling to receive, — a statement possible, so broad and so pungent that he cannot get away from it, and must either bend to it or die of it."

THE ORATOR AND HIS AUDIENCE

In his first essay on eloquence Emerson claims that "every man is eloquent once in his life." For one the opportunity of private conversation suffices, a second needs a larger audience, the third must have an antagonist, a fourth comes afire when a revolution impends, but the fifth requires "nothing less than the grandeur of absolute ideas." In a chain reaction the speaking of one man inspires others in his audience to express their views. To keep silence, Emerson says, paraphrasing Plato, brings the penalty of hearing worse orators than ourselves.

"Eloquence shows the power and possibility of man." Standing before an audience "he leads their will" by leading their thought. By this he "can make them do gladly what an hour ago they would not believe that they could be led to do at all." The richness of eloquence also gives delight. "The orator is the physician. Whether he speaks in the Capitol or on a cart, he is the benefactor that lifts men above themselves, and creates a higher appetite than he satisfies."

For Emerson an audience was the musical instrument with the "largest compass and variety" and out of which the speaker "by genius and study" could draw "the most wonderful effects." To him there was little wonder of the attractiveness of Congress for young speakers, for as "The Welsh Triads say, 'Many are the friends of the golden tongue!'" The speaker of ability is able to take "sovereign possession of the audience" and to alter "perhaps in a half hour's discourse, the convictions and habits of years." In the process the artist plays "on an assembly of men as the master on

the keys of a piano — who, seeing the people furious, shall soften and compose them."

Emerson was a student of the audience as is shown by his description of it as "the constant meter of the orator." To him there are "many audiences in every public assembly." These include those hearers who are "loud and vivacious," those who give "chaste and wise attention," those who appreciate noble sentiment, the humble, and the virtuous. All of these "are really composed out of the same persons." To these several audiences it is the duty of the speaker to be interesting, as it is "the virtue of books to be readable." The right eloquence "holds the hearer fast" and captures "his belief, that he shall not admit any opposing considerations."

In every speaking situation the orator and the audience are "in perpetual balance." With talent for speaking but without a strong personality the orator pleases the listeners, for "the commonest populace is flattered by hearing its low mind returned to it with every ornament which happy talent can add." By contrast, if personality of the speaker is added, the audience "follows like a child its preceptor, and hears what he has to say." In maintaining the balance the orator needs to remember that "there is always a rivalry between the orator and the occasion, between the demands of the hour and the prepossession of the individual. The emergency which has convened the meeting is usually of more importance than anything the debaters have in their minds, and therefore becomes imperative to them." The speaker must recognize that the "rivalry between the orator and the occasion is inevitable." To overcome it he insists on "making instead of taking his theme." He attempts to make the audience "wise in that which he knows."

In every field, even "the peaceful professions," such as "the bar, the senate, journalism, and the pulpit," it is impossible to "escape the demand for courage." If a man is to be a "true orator" he is required to be a hero. "He is challenger, and must answer all comers. His speech must be just ahead of the assembly, ahead of the whole human race, or it is superfluous. His speech is not to be distinguished from action." Amid a cold, or hostile, assembly a speaker arises, having as his only inspiration "his today's feelings." His audience questions his judgment, but "he surprises them with his tidings, with his better knowledge, his larger view, . . . and they are interested like so many children." As he speaks "he gains his victory by prophecy, where they expected repetition." His advantage came because the crowd was looking behind while he was looking ahead.

In training oneself "to mastery in this science of persuasion" he "must lay the emphasis of education, not on popular arts, but on character and insight." If people are not persuaded by a speaker, "it is not the people that are in fault for not being convinced, but he that cannot convince them."

† Italics added.

STYLE AND DELIVERY

Emerson would have us always remember that eloquence "must be grounded on the plainest narrative," that the orator "keeps his feet ever on a fact." In this he reveals that for which he stands. His "fame of voice or rhetoric" will hold his audience for a time, but "if this man does not stand for anything, he will be deserted." The power of Chatham, of Pericles, of Luther rested on this strength of character. . . . The resistance to slavery in this country has been a fruitful nursery of orators." A cause of such magnitude makes "a tough oak-stick of a man who is not to be silenced or insulted or intimidated by a mob, because he is more mob than they. . . . He has not only the documents in his pocket to answer all cavils and to prove all his positions, but he has the eternal reason in his head." Emerson, who had seen at first hand the powers of Abolitionist mobs, claimed that "the best university that can be recommended to a man of ideas is the gauntlet of the mobs."

Language as a tool of the eloquent was not overlooked by Emerson for he believed that "the orator must command the whole scale of language." One source of language is the street, for "the language of the man in the street is invariably strong." His power lies in the fact that he "is perfectly understood by all." The ability to put the "language level with the ear" of the audience was "the merit of John Brown and Abraham Lincoln — one at Charleston, one at Gettysburg — in the two best specimens of eloquence we have had in this country."

Having written poetry himself, as well as orations, Emerson believed that an orator must have the power of imagery, the chief stock in trade of the poet. "Condense some daily experience into a glowing symbol, and an audience is electrified. . . . A popular assembly, like the . . . American Congress, is commanded by these two powers, — first by a fact, then by skill of statement. Put the argument into . . . some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which they can see and handle, and carry home with them, — and the cause is half won."

"No act indicates more universal health than eloquence." The eloquent man possesses clear perceptions, logic, imagination, passion, and *character*, "the height of manhood." In this, Emerson claimed, "all men are competitors," eloquence being "as natural as swimming — an art which all men might learn, although so few do." The peculiar nature of it, which Emerson also noted in his earlier essay, is the "certain creative heat" which any man may have. Great orators "have some *habit* of heat, and moreover a certain control of it, an art of husbanding it." The fuse which touches off the hidden heat is "a commanding occasion and the inspiration of a great multitude, and he surprises by new and unlooked-for powers."

Those with nondescript or faulty voices Emerson encouraged by noting that "in moments of clearer thought or deeper sympathy, the voice will attain a music and

penetration which surprises the speaker as much as the auditor; he is also a sharer of the higher wind that blows over his strings." Yet he did not overlook the necessity of training one's voice, for he said, "A good voice has a charm in speech as in song; sometimes of itself enchains attention, and indicates a rare sensibility, especially when trained to wield all its powers."

True eloquence requires "a rich coincidence of powers, intellect, will, sympathy . . . and good fortune in the cause." To achieve it one would wish for "a mind equal to any exigency." Julius Caesar had such qualities, once even persuading pirates who had captured him to submit to him and acknowledge him as their master. Martin Luther believed, "Whoso can speak well is a man." Perfection in voice and diction were of less importance to Emerson than were the qualities of manhood. To him "eloquence is the appropriate organ of the highest personal energy . . . when it is weaponed with a power of speech, it . . . works actively in all directions, and supplies the imagination with fine materials."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Emerson's two essays on eloquence were distillations of his popular lectures on the subject and of his many thoughts on a subject which had held his attention since early boyhood. He saw eloquence as a force which gave anyone a power of leadership, a particularly useful quality in a government like that of the United States. Excellence in the art of speech gives anyone, in Emerson's estimation, "a power which cannot be defeated or put down."

The truly eloquent man is one who "must have the fact and know how to tell it." He "will have the ear of the company if he wishes it . . . and in any public assembly, him who has the facts and can and will state them, people will listen to . . ." Not only is he sane, but he can communicate his sanity. Yet the essential for triumph in the art must be "a reinforcing of man from events. . . . In transcendent eloquence, there was ever some crisis in affairs, such as could deeply engage the man to the cause he pleads . . ."

Both speaker and audience, Emerson claims, need to be "in perpetual balance." To maintain it "the interest of the audience and of the orator conspire." To succeed he makes the audience "wise in that which he knows." To them "the man with the fact is like the guide you hire to lead your party up a mountain."

Emerson based his ideas of style principally upon the concept of imagery and of knowledge of language to achieve it. "Condense some daily experience into a glowing symbol, and an audience is electrified. . . . It is a wonderful aid to the memory, which carries away the image and never loses it." The symbol needs to be "some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball," which the audience can "see and handle and carry home with them." But "pleasing speech . . . often exists without higher merits," and thus is "of no lasting power." Fact remains one essential basis for all speaking.

In all of Emerson's comments the dual threads of

"fact" and "character" are most evident. Possession of them, he believed, strengthened the weakest speaker, regardless of what handicaps of voice might be his. "Eloquence," Emerson wrote, ". . . is the best speech of the best soul." If it "aspires to be somewhat of itself, and to glitter for show, it is false and weak. . . . Its great masters . . . , resembling the Arabian warrior of fame, who wore seventeen weapons in his belt, . . . never permitted any talent — neither voice, rhythm, poetic power, anecdote, sarcasm — to appear for show; but were grave men, who preferred their integrity to their talent, and esteemed that object for which they toiled, whether the prosperity of their country, or the laws, or a reformation, or liberty of speech . . . , as above the whole world, and themselves also."

In delivery Emerson finds the greatest stimulus in the speaker's knowledge of the facts of his subject and of the inner "agitation to agitate." With these he coupled courage and manliness as requisite virtues, attributing "strength of character" as the reason for the success of such famous orators as Chatham, Pericles, and Luther. For the necessary "explosions and eruptions" of eloquence there must be "heat" somewhere. "And in cases where profound conviction has been wrought, the eloquent man is he who is . . . inwardly drunk with a certain belief. . . . The possession of the subject has of his mind . . . insures an order of expression which is the order of Nature itself. . . ."

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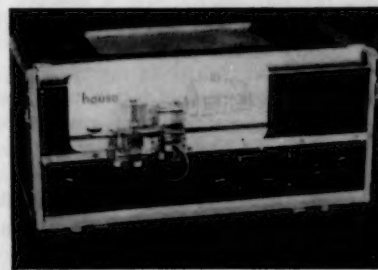
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THE MEANINGS OF POETRY

By John B. Newman

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THE WHOLE QUESTION OF OBSCURITY in modern poetry is a matter of major concern in oral interpretation because of its stress in recent years on the communication of meaning. The dilemma is doubly confounded because of the rather widespread assumption (which is seldom if ever overtly stated) that a poem is essentially a meaningful utterance, or prose statement, that is embellished, strengthened, or improved by those devices or techniques that are, rather circularly, deemed "poetic." The study of poetry has devolved into a detailed analysis of these devices and techniques, offering numerous examples to show that, remote, involved, and far-fetched though they frequently appear to be, their function is to unify, to harmonize, to reinforce, or to emphasize "the meaning of the poem." In fact, the relationship and appropriateness of its poetic devices and techniques to the meaning or prose statement is set up as a minimum essential for a good poem. Good or bad, however, the poem remains in this view a meaningful prose statement embellished, strengthened, or improved (perhaps as real estate is improved by the buildings erected upon it?) by the devices and techniques of poetry.

Ample evidence that poetry is so conceived may be found by thumbing through any one of a number of popular publications that features poetry in its contents. The difference between this sort of "poetic" verse and what is generally considered "light" verse seems, incidentally, to be simply a slight difference in subject matter, a somewhat greater difference in sentimentality (intended for sentiment), and a marked difference in generality (intended for universality) of the statement or the meaning of the piece.

Examples of this sort of verse need not necessarily be metrically "perfect": full of end-stopped lines and thumping rhymes. The subject matter, sentimentality, and generality of the "poetic" observation may even be stressed to a point seeming to relegate the metrically patterned rhyme to "the prosodic background."

Regardless of the estimation of the artistic value or poetic weight of this sort of verse, however, one cannot deny that it is intelligible. In almost every case, the verse says something, meaningfully, succinctly, and metrically. But it "says something" and has "meaning" as poetry only because of the premise that a poem is a prose statement in metrically patterned rhyme.

Let us now look for a moment at a nameless piece by e. e. cummings:¹

(im)c-a-t(mo)
b,i;l:e
FallleA
ps!fl
Oattumbll
sh?dr
lftwhirlF
(U!)(IY)
&&&

Small wonder that this sort of typographical scramble is considered unintelligible *if it is considered to be poetry at all!* One must be able to decipher it first, to translate it into ordinary writing and everyday speech (in other words, into prose) before one can presume to find the meaning! Only then could one understand the piece. And being cryptographically ingenious enough to do so, there would remain the rather dubious task of evaluating such devices and techniques as used by the poet to embellish, strengthen, and improve the meaning. Only then could one appreciate it. It would be at that remote point that one could begin to consider its oral interpretation and communication. Small wonder that a selection such as e. e. cummings' nameless poem is generally agreed to be not a good one, if it is considered to be a selection at all, for oral interpretation.

In such circumstances, it must be maintained that there is placed upon oral interpretation a serious limitation in its recognition and acceptance of a considerable segment of literary artistry and a growing body of modern poetry. Not only is there lost much that might be sheer delight, but oral interpretation is thwarted in performing the function it is supposed to serve in affording an artistic understanding and communication of poetic literature.

Suppose, however, the premise were to be restructured. Rather than a prose statement embellished, strengthened, or improved by poetic devices, suppose instead a poem to be a verbal complex composed along four dimensions of language. These dimensions would correspond to the four most general usages of any sign system, as formulated by Charles Morris.² They

¹ From *Poems 1923-1954*. Harcourt Brace, copyright © 1950 by E. E. Cummings.

² *Signs, Language and Behavior* (New York, 1946), esp. pp. 95-106.

are: (1) the informative, (2) the valuative, (3) the incitive, and (4) the systemic. The modes of signifying these sign usages in poetry would be embodied in its (a) information, (b) imagery, (c) tone, and (d) prosody.

The meaning of a poem would thus become a totality which cannot be sought along any one of its four dimensions any more than it could be found along any other one. The meaning of a poem would thus become a totality of *meanings*, with each of the four dimensions or structures of the poem expressing its own kind of meaning. A poem — a true poem — would achieve unity, harmony, and emphasis by means of a balance or equivalence of structural intensity in each of its four dimensions. The information or prose statement of a poem would be, simply, one of its dimensions, one of its structures, one of its formators. A poem could thus be conceived morphologically, as a pattern, in which its totality is more or less equally maintained and supported by its subordinate formators, rather than amorously, in which one subordinate formator is simply unified, reinforced, or emphasized by other equally subordinate ones, without purpose, without dimension, without structure.

The systemic adequacy of this premise can be immediately made evident. If it is a function of poetry to express that which cannot otherwise be expressed, it is obviously fruitless to seek the meaning of a poem in what it says at the lexical and syntactical levels of language alone. To put it another way, what the words and word-arrangements of the poem say cannot constitute the total meaning of the poem for, were that possible, *the paraphrase would be equivalent to the poem!* The composition would not have to have been written as poetry. Prose would have sufficed. That so much that goes by the name of poetry does no more should be no demurrer. Much too much of what is popularly conceived as poetry is no more than metrical prose regardless of whether or not it rhymes.

Consider music for a moment, and specifically song, especially in terms of the relation of melody and lyric. It is perhaps most markedly evident in the popular music of the day, to which words are set apparently with the sole purpose of permitting a solo singer or a group of singers to croon to the accompaniment of a dance band, that the melody "says" one thing while the lyric says another. This feature has, in fact, become so marked as to elicit some comment on the schizophrenic tendencies evident in it. There immediately comes to mind a recent popular favorite that detailed the activities a virtuous young female should engage in ("like a good girl should") whose melodic line and orchestral accompaniment were at least as bawdy and as lewd as the lines and accompaniments of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*. It will doubtlessly be agreed that the music of poetry — its prosody — can be at least as expressive and as meaningful as currently popular dance tunes, if not more so. The prosody of poetry, or the "flow" of its language, is made up of rhythm — or the

recurrence of stresses, inflections of voice, sound durations, and speech starts and stops — and of rhyme — or the recurrence of sound qualities. The meanings of poetry would, then, include "a melody," or prosodic statement, as well as "a lyric," or prose statement. One can be at least as valid, as expressive, and, therefore, as important as the other in the totality or pattern of the poem.

The valuative mode of signification, expressed in poetry by means of imagery, and the incitive mode, expressed by means of tone or mood, may frequently be coeval. But they, too, manifest discrete, though interstitial, dimensions of meaning. The choice of a given figure of speech, for instance, to evoke a specific image, though it may well incite a certain mood or attitude, will follow a prescribed pattern of imagery — an image statement or image line — as taut, as well-shaped, and as structurally sound in its own poetic dimension as the melodic line of a song or the syntactic line of a grammatical sentence. The choice of imagery, however, may be prescribed by the tone of the poem. Death, for instance, may be expressed metaphorically in order to evoke an image of it; but as to whether death is expressed as a great dissembler, a secret of nature, a sleep, a state of nothingness, or life's high meed will be prescribed by the tone statement or tone line, which, as in the case of the other dimensions of the poem, is discrete and therefore meaningful in kind.

Turning back now to the informative mode of poetry, it should be evident that the information content of a poem is simply one of the several dimensions of meaning that interact and counter-balance each other within the structural complex of the poem. This is not to say, as has been charged, that the way to write poetry is to descend to inarticulateness and word-puzzle: unintelligibility. Sheer verbal clarity and lexical intelligibility are not necessarily of prime purpose in the construction of a poem *despite their primacy in prose*. Poetry is a complex totality which can communicate more meaning than is possible in any other form because of the number of its discrete structural dimensions. Poetry can communicate, poetry has meaning, equally and totally in four dimensions — a number, incidentally, that is greater than that of any other form. Now there well may be more sign usages than those discussed here: the four modes of signification given above are, as was mentioned, the most general, since other usages are subdivisions and specializations of them. But the fact that poetry consists structurally of these four, permitting communication in each of these dimensions, makes the communicative possibilities of poetry as nearly total as any art or means yet devised.

The particular equation or pattern of one poem may permit a greater stress upon the informative mode. Other patterns may prescribe a greater stress upon one of the other modes, with the stress upon the informative conceivably being the least of the four. But that is *not* to say that the former is any more intelligible or meaningful than the latter, any more than it is to say

that a round table is a better table than a square one. It is simply a recognition and acceptance of the fact that the pattern of one composition prescribes one ranking of structural intensities while that of another requires a different one. Even a superficial reading of two such poems as "Scyros" and "The Dirty Word" by Karl Shapiro, for instance, will make this quite evident.

Let us now re-examine the nameless poem by e. e. cummings quoted above. Most bourgeois, gentle humans (who have been speaking, and thinking, prose all their lives) are frightened most by the appearance of this piece. It doesn't *look like* poetry! In fact, it doesn't look like much of anything, except a typographical scramble. But that, as John Ciardi has said, is deciphered simply enough. Translated into recognizable words — into prose — the poem says:

[An] *immobile cat* (or better: "an immobility a part of which is a stretched-out cat") [appears to] *fall*. [Then suddenly it] *leaps!* (Or better: the movement from falling to leaping is so uncontinuous as to show it in writing as "fallleaps".) [This movement makes the cat seem to] *float* [into a sort of tumbling movement — could one perhaps describe it as] *tumblish?* [In this position of movement, cats seem almost to have an ability to] *drift*. [Ah, cat.] *whirl!* *Fully* [round once more . . .] &&& (meaning: "and-and-and") [become part of immobility again!]

Now one may very sensibly, and intelligibly, ask whether this jumbled, prompted, "translation" (which is now "meaningful," incidentally, for it is a prose statement) is any nearer to poetry than the original, untranslated word puzzle? One cannot help wondering whether e. e. cummings did not leave it untranslated because even the translated version will not bear the light of day. Indeed, this cannot be gainsaid. For the prose statement is no more the totality — the meaning — of a poem than the hummed melody of the major theme is the totality of a symphony. Even as brief, as slight, and, yes, as faultily structured a piece as the e. e. cummings poem we have been examining *expresses meanings beyond* its information content or prose statement. *And it is the totality of these meanings which constitute its poetry!*

Let us now look at another brief example, a short poem by William Carlos Williams entitled "The Dance."³

In Breughel's great picture, The Kermess,
the dancers go round, they go round and
around, the squeal and the blare and the
tweedle of bagpipes, a bugle and fiddles
tipping their bellies (round as the thick-
sided glasses whose wash they impound)
their hips and their bellies off balance
to turn them. Kicking and rolling about
the Fair Grounds, swinging their butts, those
shanks must be sound to bear up under such
rollicking measures, prance as they dance
in Breughel's great picture, The Kermess.

Anyone accusing this poem of being unintelligible is illiterate in English. Except for "Breughel's" (even if one didn't know it, one could guess that it was the name of the painter of the picture referred to in the poem), every word can be found in any dictionary worthy of the name. Further, the words are spelled correctly, spaced normally, capitalized properly, and put together and punctuated sensibly. We could go on in this fashion and say that the sentences are not well constructed, that they are overly long, run-on, and non-sequential. But we could excuse this grammatical foible on the grounds of its being a poetic technique: we grant the poet this license in order that he might embellish, strengthen, or improve the meaning of the poem.

But what is the meaning of Dr. Williams' poem? Shall we answer by paraphrasing its correctly spelled, normally spaced, properly capitalized words into grammatically well-constructed sentences? Would that be the meaning? Is it not evident that any prose translation, whether it be précis, paraphrase, or panegyric, would, at most, be but *one* meaning of the poem? Could it, with any validity, be claimed that this (or any) poem's imagery, tone, and prosody — in short, its so-called poetic devices and techniques — strengthen or reinforce its one particular, informative meaning? Or to put it the other way around, does the information content of this poem subsume its imagery, its mood, or its movement of sound? In fact, does any one of the latter three subsume the others in any other order? Is it not more appropriate to say instead that *the meanings* of the poem, interstitial but discrete, maintain themselves in balance — a balance that is its poetry?

The value to oral interpretation of this approach to poetry is manifold. As has been mentioned, such a *Poesieanschauung* can broaden the recognition, acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of a considerable segment of literary artistry and a growing body of modern poetry. Second, it relegates the elements of poetry to their rightful place in the structure of poetry as an art form. The fact, for instance, that a particular poem is cast in metrically patterned stanzaic rhyme will not, then, be deemed the reason it is poetry, but, instead, the reason why the poem was so constructed by the poet will be sought. This will relegate metrics and versification to their proper place in the structure of the poem as a totality, and lessen the inevitability of a sickening singsong that thumps the meter and the rhyme or a hissing gossipmongering supposedly in imitation of "the norm of conversation." Any other prosodic means employed by the poet, whether visual or auditory, or syntactic or lexical, will be approached not with a preconceived and prejudiced refusal to accept, but with a will to understand and a desire to appreciate what the poet is trying to accomplish. Finally, by professing a balance of tensions or an equivalence of *meanings*, no single element or several elements will be overlooked, forgotten or foregone in oral interpretation. Poetry will be conceived and communicated multi-dimensionally.

³ *The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams* (Norfolk, Conn., 1950), p. 11. Copyright 1944, 1948, and 1950 by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted by permission of New Directions.

One Man's Opinion—

(Continued from Inside Front Cover)

or browse around in the multiplicity of textbooks on public speaking, you probably have "favorite chapters" in various of these books relative to particular topics. Which book, in your estimation, contains the best chapter on speech and personality, on methods of organization, on the effective delivery of speeches, on style, on modes of developing ideas, on the forms of support — or proof, on the problems of stage fright, or of finding topics, or of commencing the preparation of a speech? In other words, if you were to assemble from all the books on public speaking that have been published a particular sequence of selected chapters that would constitute the "ideal textbook," what would they be?

Send in your own selections! If we get enough of them to be representative, TODAY'S SPEECH will carry the results of your nominations. The results of the cumulative judgment of our readers could be of great value and interest to practicing speakers and teachers — and, perchance, to budding authors who contemplate writing a book of their own. If the task of complete analysis and evaluation seems too formidable, perhaps you already have in mind one or several favorite "references" — particular chapters that for one reason or another you feel are "must" reading for students of Speech. Send them in!

While you are doing this, if you also have favorite articles from the files of TODAY'S SPEECH that you think no-one should miss, let us have your nominations of these, also. "The voice of the people" may not be the "voice of God"; but we never under-estimate the value of our readers' judgment.

* * * * *

TEACHING SPEECH ABROAD

Would you like to spend a year abroad, teaching Speech? The chances are best in Theatre and Speech Therapy, but are not negligible in General Speech (public speaking, group discussion, radio-TV, and voice improvement). During the past five years 54 Speech teachers have applied for Fullbright grants; five were appointed. For all subject areas, the ratio of appointments to applications is one to four; for all the areas of Speech, the ratio is one to ten.

What accounts for our lower ratio? The reason primarily is that teachers of Speech have not been using the right approach. This is the conclusion of Francis A. Young, Executive Secretary, Committee on International Exchange of Persons (Fullbright Committee), Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, Washington, D. C.; Cornelius R. McLaughlin, Chief, Teacher Exchange Section, Division of International Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C.; Donald A. Bullard, Director, Department of Information, Institute of International Education, N. Y. C.; and William Frye, Director of Information,

N. Y. Office, UNESCO, speaking at the April SAES Convention, on a program chaired by Professor J. Calvin Callaghan.

What, then, should applicants do?

The basic approach is to select the country to which you wish to go (one in which English is the primary or secondary language) then, get in touch with leading educational authorities in that country. Discuss with them a possible teaching program — based upon their needs and your abilities. Try to get their definite approval for a specific teaching assignment which you might fulfill in their schools. This might consist of: (a) teaching classes in oral English, or in discussion, public speaking, or radio programming; (b) serving as a "travelling consultant" to visit schools in their country to advise on the development of a suitable Speech program adapted to their needs; or (c) teaching classes on "Methods of Teaching Speech" (concentrated primarily on voice and diction improvement, or oral English). As part of your essential preparation, you should: (a) learn all you can about the country in which you are interested; (b) prepare yourself to go in a spirit of humility, recognizing its achievements, and being eager to help without assuming any vestige of superiority; (c) understand that living conditions will be quite different from those to which you are accustomed — and approach this fact with a spirit of adventure and pleasure.

When a suitable program has been worked out in correspondence with the educational authorities of the country of your choice, then — and only then — are you ready to present the plan to the proper American officials. If the country has a "Fullbright program," your application may then be addressed to Dr. Young; if it does not have such a program, your inquiry should go to Dr. McLaughlin and (concurrently) to the Leaders-Specialists Department of the Division of International Education, Department of State — or to Dr. Bullard, who will be able to assist you in presenting an application to the Ford Foundation.

The Department of State has sent abroad about 100 teachers to assist foreign Departments of Education to conduct their programs of teaching oral English. Significantly, almost all of these have been professors of English, with only a handful from the Speech profession. The reason is that foreign educators are familiar with our English programs but are uninformed about our work in Speech. It is up to us, as members of the Speech profession, to "educate" our compeers abroad concerning the philosophy, methods, and resources of our Speech teachers. No one will do this for us. It is up to us.

Conclusion: if you want to spend a year teaching abroad, don't make a "blind" application for a Fullbright grant, but proceed as advised above! First of all, work through the Ministry of Education (or an accredited University or large city school system) of the country of your choice. The experience will be valuable; it is worth the trouble of making intelligent preparation.

FANATICISM VS. ORATORY

Dear Mr. Editor,

One's initial impression upon reading Mr. Philip Schug's article, 'Fanaticism: A Practical Critique' (*Today's Speech*, January, 1958) may be that it is so biased as not to demand a considered answer. Whether it be from his initial definition of 'fanatic' ('not one of them could ever be trusted') or his final evaluation of one, readers are left with the feeling that the writer at least approaches the use of (if not actually engages in) the very techniques which he condemns.

Perhaps more important the discussion — and especially the introductory portion — fails to realize that (1) the essence of great speaking is being absorbed (I could almost say, 'carried away') with one's ideas; and (2) every leader who has moved society has crystallized issues so that a man though a fool need not err therein. Both of these characteristics are true in a long list of ethical reformers — a list which would include Jesus of Nazareth, the Apostle Paul, Wycliffe, Ridley, Burke, Gladstone, Patrick Henry, or Billy Graham.

Mr. Schug is perhaps too unacquainted with the literature of historical movements to see clearly the place of the 'spirit-filled' man.

Finally, the Unitarian minister has avoided the ethical principle involved in his discussion: for some of his men had the genuine welfare of the people at heart — and were willing to lay down their lives for it.

Granted: there are 'fanatics' who use the spoken word as a demagogic tool, but it is a gross injustice and oversimplification to label an orator a fanatic, in-

trinsically to be distrusted, because he wishes to lead one or one million out of darkness or chaos into light and peace.

ROBERT W. SMITH
June 4, 1958

* * * * *

HOW JAPANESE CONDUCT A DISPUTE

"Well, they just stand and glare at each other. Generally, accusations are exchanged, but they are brief and to the point, and they serve to send the red-hot blood of the quarrelling men up to the boiling point. But they do not double up their fists and set to. They simply try to outglare each other — glare each other to death, so to speak. Sooner or later, one begins to foam at the mouth, and then the other begins to foam at the mouth. They make snarling, hissing noises, and they go on glaring, but they don't say anything. After five or ten minutes of this, there is always a quick and sudden denouement. One of the men will say 'baka' (a fighting word in Japanese, though it only means fool), then turns on his heel and stalks proudly up the street. The fight is over . . . but the point to note is that, whereas a couple of quarrelling Chinese will put on a full-dress Congressional debate for you, the Japanese will hardly say a word. They feel, and because they feel their way through life, they make wonderful poets and artists, but very poor conversationalists. By the same token, it is doubtful whether they will ever develop the art of democratic debate."

—From, Charles H. Parker: *Dog Eats Moon*, 1950.

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by JON EISENSEN, Professor of Speech and Director of the Speech and Hearing Clinic, Queens College, New York

1958, 303 pages, \$4.75

The Macmillan Company

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THE DECLINE AND FALL OF PERSUASION IN SALES TRAINING

By George A. Field

Dr. Field (Ph.D. in Sociology, U. of Pennsylvania) has worked on sales programs for Ford, Chevrolet, Chrysler, and the McCann-Erickson Advertising Agency. He is now Assoc. Prof. in the School of Business Administration, Wayne University.

OUTSIDE OF THE POLITICAL REALM, the American salesman is one of the foremost practitioners of the art of persuasive speaking. Although we sometimes wish he would leave us alone, the Salesman, backed by advertising, has turned America from a primitive backwoods economy into the wealthiest country in the world. Anyone who can look back a generation or more will recall vividly the derisive jeers with which inventions like the automobile were greeted. Crude as they were, salesmen managed to sell them, thus enabling manufacturers to stay in business until they could bring out products that defied contempt.

The result has been a constantly rising material standard of living, a high level of employment, and the development of mass production systems which rest ultimately on the ability of factories to sell what they produce at a price that will keep them in business.

It is agreed by most top executives today that we can build more than we can sell in most lines of industry. Marketing is the central problem, and the advent of automation is putting a tighter squeeze on the marketing machinery. Thus the future of the American economy rests to a considerable extent on the shoulders of the American salesman. Training him in persuasion is thus of critical importance.

The growing importance of selling has been accepted by industry along with a dawning realization of the fact that selling can be taught. The old "Salesmen are born, not made" idea is not dead yet but intelligent sales managers today recognize that while talent for selling varies in individuals, it requires training for maximum effectiveness. In that respect it does not differ from musical talent or the aptitudes that make a medical student good material for the medical profession — after considerable training.

Now, the principles of persuasion are not a deeply kept secret. Valuable principles and insights can be gained from books on persuasive speaking, salesmanship, and advertising. And business organizations devote very large sums to training their salesmen.

Yet most sales training programs contain very little training in persuasion.

A typical sales-training program will contain orientation material about the company, plus an abundance of informative and inspirational material about the

product. (Some of them have some very fancy adjectives describing the products and scuttling competitive products.) But little or no persuasion.

Why this paradox? The answer is not simple. Part of it lies in man's natural tendency to set himself at the center of the world. If you talk about yourself, your product, your company in glowing terms, isn't that persuasion?

Another factor in the etiology of the "product-instead-of-persuasion" disease is our recent emergence from a production economy. When product development, product improvement, and manufacturing in quantity presented seemingly insurmountable problems, management was immersed in production up to the eyebrows. Today, with mass production a commonplace in most industries, manufacturers whose inventories are piling up are beginning to scrutinize the consumer more closely. The result has been an almost frantic turning to market research, motivation research, and anything else that might help to galvanize sluggish buyers. More and more consumer analysis finds its way into advertising. But sales training is usually the last to profit from a company's study of the consumer.

The situation is not helped any by the fact that many sales managers are not themselves familiar with basic persuasion. Some of them have come up from the ranks of successful salesmen; they can sell, but they don't always know why. And sometimes the methods they have used are peculiar to their personality — the attempt to transfer these techniques to other salesmen often falls flat as ginger ale left over from the office party.

The net result has been a general breakdown in training in salesmanship. This in turn leads to misdirected efforts, inefficiency, high cost of sales, and sometimes the substitution of mail-order or self-service systems for personal selling.

This situation is not likely to change until there is general recognition that salesmanship must be audience-oriented. Product information is merely ammunition. Out of a hundred product points, only one or two might motivate a specific prospect. Hence the motivational analysis of the individual prospect, the selection of the appeal, and the audience-adaptation are fundamental to training in salesmanship. The salesman must be taught

to analyse his audience, to individualize his presentation, to search for and find the fundamental motivations of each customer. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that establishment of common ground and a favorable attitude toward the salesman, combined with intelligent motivational analysis of the customer, is the only way a salesman can effectively serve a customer and demonstrate how his product will solve a customer's problems.

For instance, in automobile selling, the untrained salesman will greet a prospect with a barrage of irrelevant information about the car he is selling, or trying to sell. The salesman trained in persuasion, on the other hand, concentrates on learning about the prospect. What does he look for in a car? What features does he consider most important? What does he like best, and least, in his present car? How does he use a car? What is his family situation? His business?

Knowing these facts, a salesman can select the proper model and accessories. Then, in his sales presentation, he can concentrate on the features that interest — and hence motivate — the prospect. And throughout the demonstration, he is subordinating the product factbook to his own sincere interest in helping the customer, whom he treats as an honored guest in his home, instead of some drifter who came in to kick the tires on the new models.

When persuasive principles are properly employed in selling, the customer is usually happy and the salesman prosperous. The day is coming — must come — when persuasion in its most effective (and hence most ethical) form is the dominant consideration in selling. Otherwise our factories will idle and workers will be jobless.

Speaking vs. Writing—

(Continued from Page 19)

of the lines. And then whether pronounced aloud or merely heard in the silence of the mind, the poem takes on a re-creative and organic freshness. And it is in such a respondent experience that writing and speaking are one.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ *Language: A Modern Synthesis*. St. Martin's Press, 1957.
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- ⁸ Jack Gould, in *The New York Times*, February 9, 1958.
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